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Biography.

By John Masefield.

WHEN I am buried, all my thoughts and acts
Will be reduced to lists of dates and facts,
And long before this wandering flesh is rotten
The dates which made me will be all forgotten ;
And none will know the gleam there used to be
About the feast days freshly kept by me,
But men will call the golden hour of bliss
" About this time," or " shortly after this."

Men do not heed the rungs by which men climb
Those glittering steps, those milestones upon Time,
Those tombstones of dead selves, those hours of birth,
Those moments of the soul in years of earth.
They mark the height achieved, the main result,
The power of freedom in the perished cult,
The power of boredom in the dead man's deeds
Not the bright moments of the sprinkled seeds.

By many waters and on many ways
I have known golden instants and bright days ;
The day on which, beneath an arching sail
I saw the Cordilleras and gave hail ;
The summer day on which in heart's delight
I saw the Swansea Mumbles bursting white,
The glittering day when all the waves wore flags
And the ship Wanderer came with sails in rags ;
That curlew-calling time in Irish dusk
When life became more splendid than its husk,

When the rent chapel on the brae at Slains
Shone with a doorway opening beyond brains;
The dawn when, with a brace-block's creaking cry,
Out of the mist a little barque slipped by,
Spilling the mist with changing gleams of red,
Then gone, with one raised hand and one turned head;
The howling evening when the spindrift's mists
Broke to display the four Evangelists,
Snow-capped, divinely granite, lashed by breakers,
Wind-beaten bones of long since buried acres;
The night alone near water when I heard
All the sea's spirit spoken by a bird;
The English dusk when I beheld once more
(With eyes so changed) the ship, the citied shore,
The lines of masts, the streets so cheerly trod
(In happier seasons) and gave thanks to God.
All had their beauty, their bright moments' gift,
Their something caught from Time, the ever-swift.

All of those gleams were golden; but life's hands
Have given more constant gifts in changing lands,
And when I count those gifts, I think them such
As no man's bounty could have bettered much:
The gift of country life, near hills and woods
Where happy waters sing in solitudes,
The gift of being near ships, of seeing each day
A city of ships with great ships under weigh,
The great street paved with water, filled with shipping,
And all the world's flags flying and seagulls dipping.

Yet when I am dust my penman may not know
Those water-trampling ships which made me glow,
But think my wonder mad and fail to find
Their glory, even dimly, from my mind,
And yet they made me:
not alone the ships
But men hard-palmed from tallying-on to whips,
The two close friends of nearly twenty years
Sea-followers both, sea-wrestlers and sea-peers,
Whose feet with mine wore many a bolthead bright
Treading the decks beneath the riding light.

Yet death will make that warmth of friendship cold
And who'll know what one said and what one told
Our hearts' communion and the broken spells
When the loud call blew at the strike of bells ?
No one, I know, yet let me be believed
A soul entirely known is life achieved.

Years blank with hardship never speak a word
Live in the soul to make the being stirred,
Towns can be prisons where the spirit dulls
Away from mates and ocean-wandering hulls
Away from all bright water and great hills
And sheep-walks where the curlews cry their fills
Away in towns, where eyes have nought to see
But dead museums and miles of misery
And floating life un-rooted from man's need
And miles of fish-hooks baited to catch greed
And life made wretched out of human ken
And miles of shopping women served by men.
So, if the penman sums my London days
Let him but say that there were holy ways
Dull Bloomsbury streets of dull brick mansions old
With stinking doors where women stood to scold
And drunken waits at Christmas with their horn
Droning the news, in snow, that Christ was born ;
And windy gas lamps and the wet roads shining
And that old carol of the midnight whining,
And that old room (above the noisy slum)
Where there was wine and fire and talk with some
Under strange pictures of the wakened soul
To whom this earth was but a burnt-out coal.

O Time, bring back those midnights and those friends,
Those glittering moments that a spirit lends
That all may be imagined from the flash
The cloud-hid god-game through the lightning gash,
Those hours of stricken sparks from which men took
Light to send out to men in song or book.
Those friends who heard St. Pancras' bells strike two
Yet stayed until the barber's cockerel crew,
Talking of noble styles, the Frenchman's best,
The thought beyond great poets not expressed,
The glory of mood where human frailty failed,
The forts of human light not yet assailed,

Till the dim room had mind and seemed to brood
Binding our wills to mental brotherhood,
Till we became a college, and each night
Was discipline and manhood and delight,
Till our farewells and winding down the stairs
At each gray dawn had meaning that Time spares
That we, so linked, should roam the whole world round
Teaching the ways our brooding minds had found
Making that room our Chapter, our one mind
Where all that this world soiled should be refined.

Often at night I tread those streets again
And see the alley glimmering in the rain,
Yet now I miss that sign of earlier tramps
A house with shadows of plane-boughs under lamps
The secret house where once a beggar stood
Trembling and blind to show his woe for food.
And now I miss that friend who used to walk
Home to my lodgings with me, deep in talk,
Wearing the last of night out in still streets
Trodden by us and policemen on their beats
And cats, but else deserted ; now I miss
That lively mind and guttural laugh of his
And that strange way he had of making gleam,
Like something real, the art we used to dream.

London has been my prison ; but my books
Hills and great waters, labouring men and brooks,
Ships and deep friendships and remembered days
Which even now set all my mind ablaze
As that June day when, in the red bricks' chinks
I saw the old Roman ruins white with pinks
And felt the hillside haunted even then
By not dead memory of the Roman men.
And felt the hillside thronged by souls unseen
Who knew the interest in me and were keen
That man alive should understand man dead
So many centuries since the blood was shed.
And quickened with strange hush because this comer
Sensed a strange soul alive behind the summer.

BIOGRAPHY

That other day on Ercall when the stones
Were sunbleached white, like long unburied bones,
While the bees droned and all the air was sweet
From honey buried underneath my feet
Honey of purple heather and white clover
Sealed in its gummy bags till summer's over.
Then other days by water, by bright sea,
Clear as clean glass and my bright friend with me
The cove clean bottomed where we saw the brown
Red spotted plaice go skimming six feet down
And saw the long fronds waving, white with shells,
Waving, unfolding, drooping, to the swells ;
That sadder day when we beheld the great
And terrible beauty of a Lammas spate
Roaring white-mouthed in all the great cliff's gaps
Headlong, tree-tumbling fury of collapse,
While drenching clouds drove by and every sense
Was water roaring or rushing or in offence
And mountain sheep stood huddled and blown gaps gleamed
Where torn white hair of torrents shook and streamed.
That sadder day when we beheld again
A spate going down in sunshine after rain
When the blue reach of water leaping bright
Was one long ripple and clatter, flecked with white
And that far day, that never blotted page
When youth was bright like flowers about old age
Fair generations bringing thanks for life
To that old kindly man and trembling wife
After their sixty years : Time never made
A better beauty since the Earth was laid
Than that thanksgiving given to grey hair
For the great gift of life which brought them there.

Days of endeavour have been good : the days
Racing in cutters for the comrade's praise,
The day they led my cutter at the turn
Yet could not keep the lead and dropped astern
The moment in the spurt when both boats' oars
Dipped in each other's wash and throats grew hoarse
And teeth ground into teeth and both strokes quickened
Lashing the sea, and gasps came, and hearts sickened
And coxswains damned us, dancing, banking stroke,
To put our weights on, though our hearts were broke

And both boats seemed to stick and sea seemed glue,
The tide a mill race we were struggling through
And every quick recover gave us squints
Of them still there and oar tossed water-glints,
And cheering came, our friends, our foemen cheering,
A long, wild, rallying murmur on the hearing
" Port Fore ! " and " Starboard Fore ! " " Port Fore."
" Port Fore."
" Up with her, Starboard," and at that each oar
Lightened, though arms were bursting, and eyes shut
And the oak stretchers grunted in the strut
And the curse quickened from the cox, our bows
Crashed, and drove talking water, we made vows
Chastity vows and temperance ; in our pain
We numbered things we'd never eat again
If we could only win ; then came the yell
" Starboard," " Port Fore," and then a beaten bell
Rung as for fire to cheer us. " Now." Oars bent
Soul took the looms now body's bolt was spent,
" Damn it, come on now." " On now," " On now," " Starboard."
" Port Fore." " Up with her, Port " ; each cutter harboured
Ten eye-shut painsick strugglers, " Heave, oh, heave,"
Catcalls waked echoes like a shrieking sheave.
" Heave," and I saw a back, then two. " Port Fore."
" Starboard." " Come on." I saw the midship oar
And knew we had done them. " Port Fore."
" Starboard." " Now."
I saw bright water spurting at their bow
Their cox' full face an instant. They were done.
The watchers' cheering almost drowned the gun.
We had hardly strength to toss our oars ; our cry
Cheering the losing cutter was a sigh.

Other bright days of action have seemed great :
Wild days in a pampero off the Plate ;
Good swimming days, at Hog Back or the Coves
Which the young gannet and the corbie loves ;
Surf-swimming between rollers, catching breath
Between the advancing grave and breaking death,
Then shooting up into the sunbright smooth
To watch the advancing roller bare her tooth,

And days of labour also, loading, hauling ;
Long days at winch or capstan, heaving, pawling ;
The days with oxen, dragging stone from blasting,
And dusty days in mills, and hot days masting.
Trucking on dust-dry deckings smooth like ice,
And hunts in mighty wool-racks after mice ;
Mornings with buckwheat when the fields did blanch
With White Leghorns come from the chicken ranch.
Days near the spring upon the sunburnt hill,
Plying the maul or gripping tight the drill.
Delights of work most real, delights that change
The headache life of towns to rapture strange
Not known by townsmen, nor imagined ; health
That puts new glory upon mental wealth
And makes the poor man rich.
But that ends, too,
Health with its thoughts of life ; and that bright view
That sunny landscape from life's peak, that glory,
And all a glad man's comments on life's story
And thoughts of marvellous towns and living men
And what pens tell and all beyond the pen
End, and are summed in words so truly dead
They raise no image of the heart and head,
The life, the man alive, the friend we knew,
The mind ours argued with or listened to,
None ; but are dead, and all life's keenness, all,
Is dead as print before the funeral,
Even deader after, when the dates are sought,
And cold minds disagree with what we thought.

This many pictured world of many passions
Wears out the nations as a woman fashions
And what life is is much to very few,
Men being so strange, so mad, and what men do
So good to watch or share ; but when men count
Those hours of life that were a bursting fount
Sparkling the dusty heart with living springs,
There seems a world, beyond our earthly things,
Gated by golden moments, each bright time
Opening to show the city white like lime,
High towered and many peopled. This made sure,
Work that obscures those moments seems impure

Making our not-returning time of breath
Dull with the ritual and records of death
That frost of fact by which our wisdom gives
Correctly stated death to all that lives.

Best trust the happy moments. What they gave
Makes man less fearful of the certain grave,
And gives his work compassion and new eyes
The days that make us happy make us wise.

Among My Books*

By Frederic Harrison.

PART VI

GENERAL LITERATURE.

In closing these notes upon Books, my last word, as it was my first word, is this: Read again the good old books, and do not cast them aside as stale, for ever looking for the "last thing out," the very name of which, when it has been scampered through, will be forgotten in a week. To a reader of any brain the great books of the world are ever new; at each reading things strike us which we had never noticed, or perhaps had forgotten, or even had misunderstood. I take up again my Plato, my Shakespeare, my Gibbon, my Scott—and I say, How did I miss that, why did I forget that, did I really never read this before?

I began to study "the Decline and Fall" for my degree just sixty years ago, and I have been reading it in various editions, and lastly in Bury, constantly since then. I have read it in Rome, when I passed a winter in Italy and took out the entire set. And yet the interminable narrative always seems to me new. One cannot take in much at a sitting. It is like a Kinema show of the Delhi Durbar. And so with Fielding or Scott. I can read these novels, even the later and lesser novels, over and over again with fresh enjoyment, and when I go on a tour, or on a cruise, I lay in half a dozen cheap Fieldings or Scotts to keep my mind clear and my spirits sweet. A man who cannot read his poets and his histories, essays, and romances again and again is like one who tells us that he loves music, but, as he once listened to Gluck's *Orpheus*, or Mozart's *Don Juan*, or Beethoven's Symphonies years ago, he never wants to hear them again.

A good test to judge great literature is—what can one read again and again and always find fresh? Personal taste may affect the judgment; but for myself I find (to take the moderns alone) that I am never tired of Fielding, nay, of Sterne, of Scott, Jane Austen, Balzac, George Sand,

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Anatole France. The earlier and greater Thackerays, or Trollopes, or the short and early George Eliots, I can take up any day and anywhere. The long and late Thackerays, Trollopes, George Eliots, rarely tempt me to return to them. Nor does Dickens, nor the Brontës, nor Meredith, nor Zola, nor Tolstoy. Of course, I am an ardent admirer of Dickens—I am a real Pickwickian, as I have said at length, and I hold Dickens's four or five masterpieces to stand in the front rank of modern literature. As critic I say that; but as reader I do not find myself returning to them. Now *Vanity Fair*, or *Esmond*, or Thackeray's smaller caricatures and satires, I can turn to at any time. I find myself more often taking up *Emma*, or *Cranford*, or *Doctor Thorne* than *Clarissa*, or *The Caxtons*, or *Great Expectations*. It is, no doubt, the charm of *style*, of the simple, easy music of phrase which conveys the idea straight to the mind without either discords, conundrums, or redundance. Richardson wastes words; Dickens has no formed style; Bulwer, and George Eliot, and Meredith, wrote themselves into styles of their own, either turgid, or precious, or cryptic—and therefore, with all their imaginative gifts, they are more or less tiresome for constant perusal. It is Style alone which can secure perennial delight—and in Style simplicity, ease, grace.

Pure, easy, well-bred prose is always welcome, however familiar or old. The greater masters of such a prose I rank thus: Voltaire, in his *Romans*, which I can read time after time; Rousseau, in spite of his morbid sentiment; George Sand—but not Hugo, nor Dumas, nor Flaubert—Swift, Goldsmith, Gray, Lamb, Thackeray. To my taste some of our noblest writers of prose are apt to be boisterous, embroidered, rhapsodical, garrulous, or smart. So that, whatever their splendid form in their highest moments, we cannot take them as types of perfect style: even Bacon, or Dryden or Gibbon, or Johnson, or De Quincey, or Macaulay, or Ruskin. We enjoy each of them in segments and at times. But for a long spell and in ordinary hours, there is too much drum and trumpet in the orchestra; or the pomp and volume of the music either drown the sense to be conveyed or demand too close an attention to be easily sustained.

In all English prose, no one to my mind can beat Goldsmith. I take the *Vicar of Wakefield* to be the high-water mark of English. It is free from that air of the Beau

in full dress of *The Spectator*, and from the sardonic harshness of Swift. My "Works of Oliver Goldsmith" are in four volumes, 8vo, 1854, and I can read any part—even 'The Citizen of the World,' the Comedies, nay, the Poems. To me dear "Goldie" is the Mozart of English prose—the feckless, inspired ne'er-do-well of eighteenth century art. He was a poor creature; and so were Sterne, and Lamb, and De Quincey—but they all four live by virtue of their unfailing charm, their ease, grace, and human feeling.

The supreme form of this lovely type is seen in the *Letters* of Cowper—the purest and most beautiful letters in English—I had almost said in all modern literature. How marvellous a thing is the magic of language, that the intimate outpourings of heart to a few obscure parsons and women in a sleepy countryside, written by a morbid scholar some 130 years ago, whilst Britain and Europe were shaken with tremendous events—letters that record nothing but the affectionate thoughts of a pensive invalid, his delight in his books, in cats, and birds, and flowers, and meadows—that this should enthral busy men of the world in an age of change and strife like ours! Read Cowper's letter of 1790 to Mrs. Bodham, when she sent him his mother's portrait, or his letters to John Johnson—his "dearest Johnnie"—full of his exquisite taste in poetry, his loving advice to his young cousin, his peaceful rapture in Nature. There is not a word in these private letters that was written for any eye but that of gentle women, rural clerics, and students whose very names the world would never have heard but for this—and they remain unequalled as the most perfect letters in our language.

Gray's *Letters*, too, are classics, were it not that they are too redolent of scholarship and have not the poignant tenderness of Cowper's. Edward FitzGerald's also in our own day are excellent reading—another lonely scholar and poet in the Eastern counties—the best letters, I think, of our times. But "Fitz-" is too whimsical, too much up-to-date, too queer to give us anything like the charm of Cowper. Tennyson wrote few letters at all, and none having any mark of his genius have been published. Nor can we see Browning the poet in his prose as yet given to the world. Much in Ruskin's Letters is magnificent, but they differ little from similar outpourings of self in his books; and the greater part of *Fors*, of *Præterita*, of *Arrows of the Chase*, and such collected pieces, are really

intimate diaries or familiar letters, flung out to the world instead of being reserved for the personal intercourse with a dear friend. Ruskin's public and private career were all one and the same.

In their own line, Byron's *Letters* have intense life and power, and for the most part are better reading than much of his verse. It is true they have not the taste of Gray, nor the aroma of Cowper, nor the humour of "Fitz-," but they ring with the vitality of a master-mind, they cut folly to the bone, and defy the world of cant and conventions. I never take up Byron's *Letters* and *Diaries* without remembering the amusing paradox of my master in the law—"No poet—but a great man." Shelley's life was too stormy, and his own nature was too eager, sensitive, and wayward, to suffer him to do full justice to his genius in his *Letters* as we know them. He has not the serene lovability of Cowper, nor the measured judgment and culture of Gray, nor the fun and gossip of FitzGerald. I take little enjoyment from Landor's prose. His *Conversations* are overrated—they are often stilted, unnatural, and monotonous. Achilles, Mahomet, and Anne Boleyn, all talk the same Savage-Landorisms. Can any dialogue be more unnatural than that of Menelaus and Helen, or that of Leofric and Godiva? Landor, no doubt, was a man of genius, with some grand thoughts and noble aspirations in him, but he always seems to me one of those unlucky men of genius who never found the right instrument on which to express their souls. Devoted as I am to Keats's poetry, I find no such charm in his *Letters*. Exquisite poet as he was, he was no scholar, his culture was haphazard, and his breeding was ordinary—in fact, his was in no sense a fine nature, and his letters show him as he was. I will not read the *Letters to Fanny Brawne*, and I put them aside. There are some touching passages in the later *Letters*, especially in the last to Mrs. Brawne, from Naples, 1820, and in others there are the words of a poet, but never in heart, nor in language, nor in judgment do they give us the tenderness of Cowper's *Letters* nor the fire of Byron's.

Memoirs stand in the same order as Letters, for they are seldom written for any immediate publication—and sometimes for no publication at all. No one needs to be encouraged to read Horace Walpole's, or Madame D'Arblay's, or Burnet, or Evelyn, or Pepys. Of all of these, if Madame D'Arblay is the most lively picture of a rather unlovely

age, Horace Walpole, to my mind, is our prince of diarists. If he has not the feminine touch of Fanny Burney, nor the impudence of Pepys, he lived in a more stirring world and among much greater men. But our best writers of Memoirs cannot hold their own with the best of France, of whom the first *hors concours* is Saint-Simon, with his vast canvas crowded with living portraits of a memorable age; nor with the *Memoirs* of Madame de Motteville; and along with both the *Letters* of Madame de Sévigné, which are practically historical and critical diaries even more than family epistles.

Saint-Simon, whose twenty-two volumes have been boiled down to four in English, must ever remain unequalled in his pictures of historical persons, and a unique product of modern civilisation. Nor, in the art of critical correspondence, of which the personal and literary charm can never be lost by time, will the *Letters* of Madame de Sévigné ever be displaced or neglected. The painter of such a peculiar world was exactly qualified for the task. A woman of beautiful nature, with a rare gift of subtle observation and unfailing literary charm, for twenty years studied and described a society of strange pride, elegance, culture, and vice. And in the midst of this Comus rout of extravagant debauchery, Marie de Rabutin-Chantal remains a sweet, pure, affectionate woman, devoted to her rather ordinary daughter, and passing just judgments on the manners of a brilliant age.

I shall say little about French books here, though for my part I read as much French prose as English; and in critical essays—and what they call *Pensées*—it is agreed that the French hold the field. In their own line we have little that can be ranked with Voltaire's best—with the *Thoughts* of Pascal, of Montaigne, of Vauvenargues, La Rochefoucauld—with the pamphlets of J. P. Courier, the wit of Talleyrand, and the imperial rescripts of Napoleon. In the line of which the finest types are *Manon Lescaut* or *Pierre et Virginie*, *Nouvelle Héloïse* or *La Mare au Diable*, we have little in English to compare; nor again with the short studies on Nature by Jules Michelet, or Victor Hugo's pictures of the sea.

I suppose, too, that in literary criticism we have to give way to the French, who from Voltaire to Renan have set the tone. Nothing in the entire history of literature equals the mass, completeness, learning, and authority of

Sainte-Beuve. Those who know the thirty-odd volumes of his *Causeries* and *Portraits*, still to be read only in French, will know nearly all that is worth knowing of French literature. We have nothing in English that can compare with this encyclopædic mass of critical learning and just estimate, even if we call up all that we owe to Johnson, Coleridge, Carlyle, Matthew Arnold, Pater, and Symonds—to say nothing of the famous men happily still with us—for of living writers, in this series of essays, I very humbly and wisely forbear to speak. Coleridge, indeed, was a much greater man than Sainte-Beuve, both as critic and as writer; but he did not touch one-tenth or twentieth of the ground. And admirable critic and delightful writer as was Matthew Arnold, he is after all, in mere range and knowledge, hardly more than a Sainte-Beuve *le petit*.

One of the hindrances to pleasant reading nowadays is the doleful superstition "made in Germany" that a serious work is bound to be "exhaustive," drawn from original sources—what the Germans call *grïndlich*. That is to say, every scrap of documentary evidence has to be not only seen by the author, but thrust upon the reader. Now, nine-tenths of contemporary documents are just as shallow, untrue, even mendacious, as contemporary gossip. The business of historian or biographer is to weigh the value of all this old paper and to give us his own mature estimate of the real facts. But the fashion is to serve up most of this documentary material in the raw, and leave the reader to draw his own conclusion. In the result the reader finds these "exhaustive" treatises to be exhausting, and he turns from them to something less prolix. He is told that a well-knit, well-digested book, say, in one modest volume, 12mo, is "a sketch," "a study," a thumb-nail portrait, not to be treated as "serious" literature. Such a book as Southey's *Life of Nelson*, Voltaire's *Charles XII.*, Mark Pattison's *Milton*, Froude's *Bunyan*, Goldwin Smith's *Cowper*, tell us what is essential to know of the man. The rest is to be found in their works or in the history of their times. But it is to confuse and weary the ordinary reader if every bit of printed stuff relating to the subject has to be inserted *verbatim*, if the story of the events of the time and descriptions of all the persons brought into touch with the hero have to be dwelt upon at length. In a famous trial, when Whistler the painter was asked in cross-examination if he justified charging a buyer of his picture a long

price for the labour of a few mornings, he replied, "No! I value the work as the labour of a life of study!" A good book must be the result of thorough and conscientious study by the writer; but the less all this preliminary study is thrust upon the reader, the more concise and vivid is the conclusion so laboriously attained by the author—the fewer pages in fact used to convey the impression, the more willingly will the book be read. "Serious" books nowadays are too apt to become weighty, in every sense of the word.

That word of ill-omen known as Research hangs upon literature like the microbe of Sleeping Sickness. No one who knows me will suggest that I disparage thorough and exact knowledge or show any mercy as a critic to superficial work. No man has any right to make public his thoughts upon any subject until he has thoroughly exhausted and assimilated all that can be reasonably learned about it. But he has got to give us his *thoughts*, not his materials; what is *worth knowing*, not what can be stated and printed; what conclusion can be reached by Research, not what Research can unearth and cast up in a rubbish heap. Books are too often made nowadays by laborious poking into charnel houses and dustbins of the past, instead of by intelligent understanding of men and things. The first thing and the last thing in a real book is Thought. Tons of Research will not weigh down an ounce of Mind. For this canonisation of dead Facts is the ruin of healthy and pleasant reading. And if reading gives no pleasure it serves no purpose.

On this ground I welcome and I use those handy volumes of "Selections" from poetry and prose, and those summary Lives of statesmen and authors, which are coming into general favour. First and foremost of these we must place Palgrave's *Golden Treasury*, a perfect epitome of lyrical verse, which always seems to me to contain every lyric we really love, and to include nothing that we do not care for. No doubt it owes much to the exquisite taste, a veritable Ithuriel spear, of Tennyson. To know that little book is to have taken a degree in the Academy of the Poets. Another such admirable selection is Matthew Arnold's *Wordsworth*, a poet who, as Arnold truly says, singularly gains by judicious elimination of his long-winded meditations. Byron, too, may well be condensed for his fine lyrics, but when we get over our irritation at Byron's

ragged and theatrical ways, we have to read through *Childe Harold*, *Manfred*, *Cain*, and *Don Juan* as entire poems, taking the good and evil of them together. And the same is true of Shelley as well as of Keats, for those who love them best have to admit that Shelley, like his skylark, at times sings himself up far out of human ken—loses himself, in fact, in the light of æther; and Keats, who after all hardly lived to come into his own, only did his genius full justice in his exquisite sonnets, odes, and shorter lyrics rather than in the longer pieces, with some of which he was not at all satisfied, born poet as he was.

Of modern poets I find myself most often taking up Coleridge, Shelley, Tennyson, Matthew Arnold—and that in their shorter pieces: the more ambitious and long poems I read, as Saint Jerome saith the Church reads the Books of Apocrypha, "for example of life, and instruction of manners," but I do not so readily go through with them, and I am writing now about my own habits of reading. I see all the beauty of Keats, of Swinburne, Rossetti, and others whom it is the fashion to praise, I think, in needless superlatives; but for my own enjoyment I require sustained and original Thought, and not merely melodious phrase and luscious images. Thoughts, ideas, appeals to mind or action, are the essence of poetry as of all other kinds of composition. And sweet songs about nothing in particular do not long hold me. Again, they who offer Thoughts without music should write in prose, not in verse.

I turn to the condensed books in prose, and now nearly all the great men and great events may be read in one or other of the recent shorter histories and handy *Lives* of our own and European heroes in many popular series. Foremost I rank Jules Michelet's *Précis de l'Histoire Moderne*, now translated and continued by Mrs. W. Simpson. Then J. R. Green's *Short History of England* was admirable in design, even if its execution hardly equalled its plan. And this excellent book is even greatly increased in value if read in the four-volume illustrated edition of 1892–4. Several of the Lives of Statesmen and of Writers, in various series, in one short volume are all that such biographies should be. It is mischievous pedantry to ask for 1,000 pages octavo, with contemporary documents in full *verbatim*. There are at least one hundred Lives of prime

importance to civilisation, and at least ten all-important periods and movements. And the general reader needs manageable books on each of them, and he is lost if you send him without guidance to the Bodleian or the British Museum to grope amid their shelves.

Notwithstanding, or rather in consequence of, the enormous mass of material about Napoleon and his times, I think a single adequate *Life* in 300–400 pp., 12mo, is yet to seek. I think the same is needed for Alexander, for Julius Cæsar, for Charlemagne, for Alfred, for Frederick the Great, and for Washington. And we need similar condensed histories of the Byzantine Empire from the first to the last Constantine; for the Middle Ages; the Renaissance; the settlement of Europe; the Revolution, in the style of those excellent Manuals of Victor Duruy. *Mega biblion mega kakon*—the piling up of massive library works wherein the events of one year require 500 pages octavo, may be the glory of literature—but it is the death of Knowledge.

I yield to the fascination of new Travels in unknown lands, and I confess that I never see one on the Club table, where about three fresh ones appear each week, without turning them over at least for the photographs and maps. I suppose this age of rapid locomotion cannot stop to look at one of the real old primitive discoverers, such as Cook, or Bougainville, or Anson, or Ross, and the early Arctic explorers. My Cook's *Voyages*, in five folios with plates and maps, is wonderfully good reading even to-day, and so are Kane's, and Franklin's, and Parry's. Do our young friends ever take up *Eothen*, or *The Crescent and the Cross*—two books which entranced my youth, and which were literature as well as travels—and this can be said of few modern books of travel—or Burton, or Layard, or Huc, or Vambéry, or Livingstone? In these days of globe-trotting and Round the World in seventy days, it is curiously amusing to see what travelling was in the first half of the nineteenth century.

And are old-fashioned books all voted "back numbers" in journalese slang, and does no young person who respects himself ever look at *Transformation*, or the *Scarlet Letter*, or Washington Irving, or *Notre Dame de Paris*, or *Fumée* and *Le Chasseur Russe*—to say nothing of *Vathek*, or the *Amber Witch*, or *Headlong Hall?* And are the ever-fresh

Marryats of our boyhood quite superseded by Joseph Conrad, "scrapped" by the Dreadnought literature of to-day? I suppose that if I admit that I can still enjoy 'Peter Simple,' and 'Midshipman Easy,' and 'Snarley Yow,' my young friends will say that it is my second childhood. Well! all I can say is, that second childhood is a delightful time for the reader of old books. I can take up 'Peter Plymley,' and Disraeli's early Satires, 'Hadji Baba,' and the 'Rejected Addresses,' and have a good chuckle—nay, a wiser chuckle than I was able to feel sixty or seventy years ago—we old ones find more truth underneath the fun.

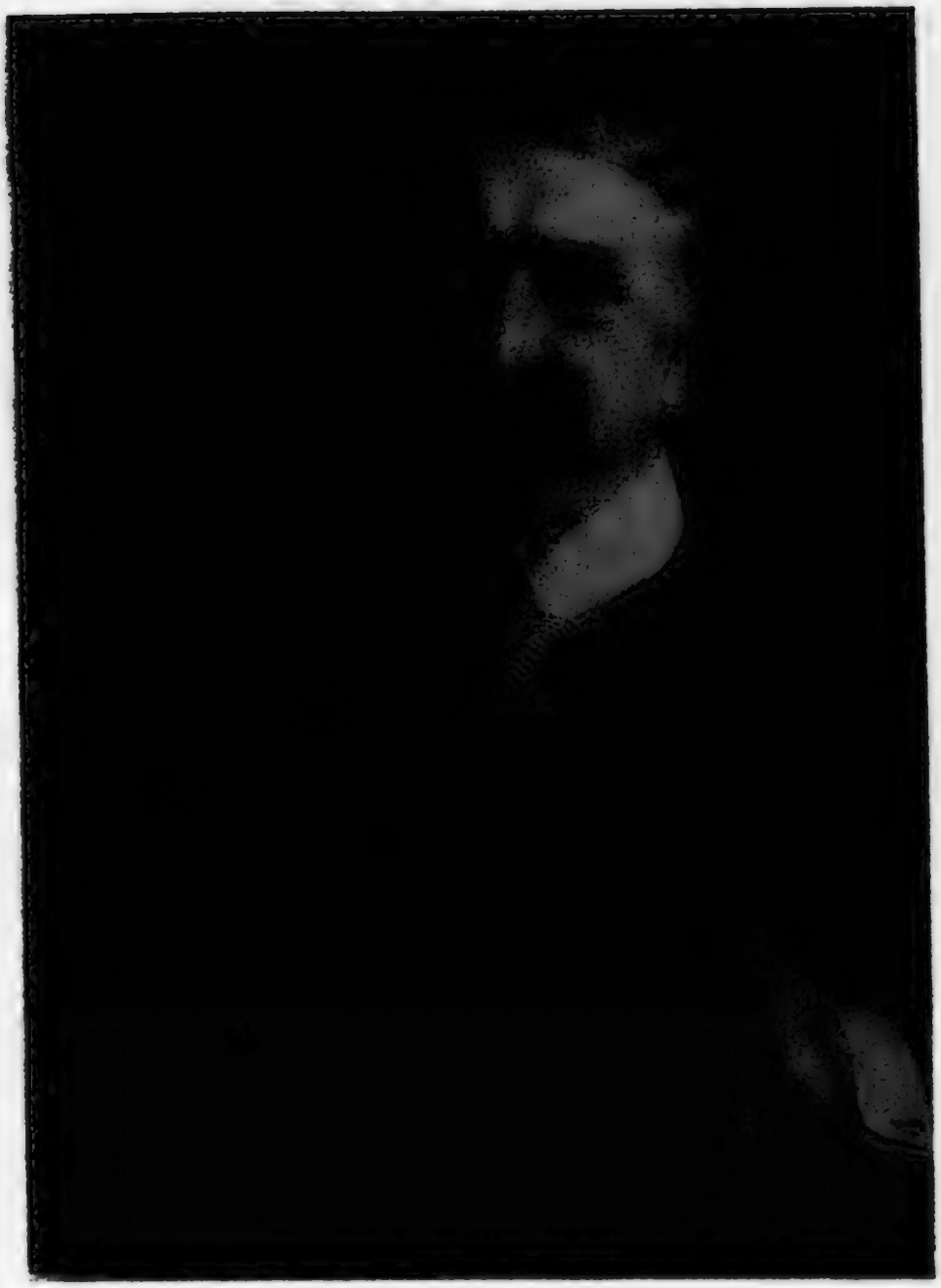
I care little for Parodies, which are almost all failures —I never could see the charm of 'Bon Gaultier'—but there are one or two which, being real criticisms, have enduring value. Apart from 'Joseph Andrews,' which, beginning as a parody, soon became an immortal romance, there are two modern Parodies—one in verse and one in prose, which are at once good fun and solid criticism of mannerism and extravagance. The 'Rejected Addresses' is the best, because the truest, Parody we have. The 'Byron' hits the poet at his weakest side, and even as a poem is finer than the poet's own prize Prologue. And it is much to Byron's credit that he pronounced the verses to be the best of their kind, with lines "which he wished he could have written himself." And Scott, too, much to the honour of his generous heart, enjoyed and praised the consummate parody of his 'Marmion' and 'Lay.' The 'Wordsworth' and the 'Crabbe' also are perfect, though we fear neither poet quite relished the joke. Half the other pieces cease to delight us, because the originals are utterly unknown to-day. But the 'Johnson,' the 'Cobbett,' the 'Southey,' the 'Coleridge,' and the 'T. Moore' have delightful touches, even if overdone in the whole. The prose Parodies of Thackeray are also consummate bits of sound criticism as well as rich with Homeric laughter; and 'Codlingsby' and 'Rowena and Rebecca' are quite worthy of 'The Rose and the Ring,' or the burlesque Ballads. I remember how a famous Oxford Don, seeing on my library table the big illustrated 'Works of Thackeray,' in twenty-eight volumes, large octavo, wondered how a serious person could commit the extravagance of purchasing such trifles. I suppose there are no books on my shelves which I take down with more pleasure and more often. Why, Thackeray

was even with his pencil a consummate caricaturist, a real ballad singer, and a writer of absolutely perfect English in every form in which our tongue can be used—whether gay, or pathetic, or sardonic, or eloquent. One who desires to write pure English has to know his Thackeray from end to end.

A fig for the Dons! But I must end these chats about Books with a serious word or two, and my main point throughout has been this. The idea that wholly new and original forms of literature or art are likely to be discovered in the twentieth century is a juvenile delusion. In the two or three thousand years that have passed since Homer and Virgil, Sappho and Horace, Plato and Cicero, and all that Italian, French, and English literature has since achieved, the possibilities of *form* in which genius can find expression have been exhausted for all practical purposes. Of course, the limitless expansion of human life and the ceaseless control over the World will give perpetually new ideas to be told and inexhaustible stores of fresh knowledge to be spread. But human language does not expand with infinite rapidity, and the *forms* of human expression are not infinitely numerous nor infinitely variable. There is such a thing as Style, both in verse and in prose. And, in the centuries since The Psalms and the Lyrical and Dramatic Poetry of the Ancients and the Moderns were made, all practicable forms have been tried. It is affectation to imagine that poetry can be made up with discordant sounds, by lumbering lines that drag when we utter them aloud, or by printing prose in set lines of equal length and vowing that this is poetry. It is more like the "Mad Hatter" paradox, that there is more real beauty in a toad than in a living man or woman.

There are Types, Standards, and Canons of Beauty both in literature and in art; and it is a cry of feebleness and conceit that a new literature and a new art are going to be invented by the sorry trick of defying all that the good sense of mankind has hitherto loved as beautiful and pleasing. All this ends in a new form of Baroque Decadence. A democratic and revolutionary age reeks with obstreperous forms of vulgarism and anarchism. And no form of either is more in evidence than the fashionable attempt to discredit or discard beauty and harmony on the ground that they are signs of weakness or decay. Grace, self-command, proportion are always strong, however sweet and delightful

to the ear, the eye, or the mind. Sophocles, Virgil, Milton, and Shelley are neither weak nor decadent because, whatever their thought, they sought to convey it in exquisite words. Nor will the combined armies of Research in Europe and America ever make Gibbon obsolete; nor will the Railway Bookstalls of the entire world ever overwhelm Fielding and Scott in an avalanche of up-to-date novels. As an old man, I stand by the old Books, the old Classics, the old Style.



George Moore

The Flaw in the Crystal

By May Sinclair

I

It was Friday, the day he always came, if (so she safeguarded it) he was to come at all. They had left it that way in the beginning, that it should be open to him to come or not to come. They had not even settled that it should be Fridays, but it always was, the week-end being the only time when he could get away; the only time, he had explained to Agatha Verrall, when getting away excited no remark. He had to, or he would have broken down. Agatha called it getting away "from things"; but she knew that there was only one thing, his wife Bella.

To be wedded to a mass of furious and malignant nerves (which was all that poor Bella was now) simply meant destruction to a man like Rodney Lanyon. Rodney's own nerves were not as strong as they had been, after ten years of Bella's. It had been understood for long enough (understood even by Bella) that if he couldn't have his week-ends he was done for; he couldn't possibly have stood the torment and the strain of her.

Of course, she didn't know he spent the greater part of them with Agatha Verrall. It was not to be desired that she should know. Her obtuseness helped them. Even in her younger and saner days she had failed, persistently, to realise any profound and poignant thing that touched him; so by the mercy of heaven she had never realised Agatha Verrall. She used to say that she had never seen anything *in* Agatha, which amounted, as he once told her, to not seeing Agatha at all. Still less could she have compassed any vision of the tie—the extraordinary, intangible, immaterial tie that held them.

Sometimes, at the last moment, his escape to Agatha would prove impossible; so they had left it further that he was to send her no forewarning; he was to come when and as he could. He could always get a room in the village inn or at the Farm near by, and in Agatha's house he would find his place ready for him, the place which had become his refuge, his place of peace.

There was no need to prepare her. She was never not prepared. It was as if by her preparedness, by the absence of preliminaries, of adjustments and arrangements, he was always there, lodged in the innermost chamber. She had set herself apart; she had swept herself bare and scoured herself clean for him. Clean she had to be; clean from the desire that he should come; clean, above all, from the thought, the knowledge she now had, that she could make him come.

For if she had given herself up to *that*.....

But she never had; never since the knowledge came to her; since she discovered, wonderfully, by a divine accident, that at any moment she could make him—that she had whatever it was, the power, the uncanny, unaccountable Gift.

She was beginning to see more and more how it worked; how inevitably, how infallibly it worked. She was even a little afraid of it, of what it might come to mean. It *did* mean that without his knowledge, separated as they were and had to be, she could always get at him.

And supposing it came to mean that she could get at him to make him do things? Why, the bare idea of it was horrible.

Nothing could well have been *more* horrible to Agatha. It was the secret and the essence of their remarkable relation that she had never tried to get at him; whereas Bella *had*, calamitously; and still more calamitously, because of the peculiar magic that there was (there must have been) in her, Bella had succeeded. To have tried to get at him would have been, for Agatha, the last treachery, the last indecency; while for Rodney it would have been the destruction of her charm. She was the way of escape for him from Bella; but she had always left her door, even the innermost door, wide open; so that where shelter and protection faced him there faced him also the way of departure, the way of escape from *her*.

And if her thought could get at him and fasten on him and shut him in there....

It could, she knew; but it need not. She was really all right. Restraint had been the essence and the secret of the charm she had, and it was also the secret and the essence of her gift. Why, she had brought it to so fine a point that she could shut out, and by shutting out destroy any feeling, any thought that did violence to any other. She could shut them all out, if it came to that, and make the whole place empty. So that, if this knowledge of her power did violence, she had only to close her door on it.

She closed it now on the bare thought of his coming; on the little innocent hope she had that he would come. By an ultimate refinement and subtlety of honour she refused to let even expectation cling to him.

But though it was dreadful to "work" her gift that way, to make him do things, there was another way in which she did work it, lawfully, sacredly, incorruptibly—the way it first came to her. She had worked it twenty times (without his knowledge, for how he would have scoffed at her!) to make him well.

Before it had come to her, he had been, ever since she knew him, more or less ill, more or less tormented by the nerves that were wedded so indissolubly to Bella's. He was always, it seemed to her terror, on the verge. And she could say to herself, "Look at him *now*!"

His abrupt, incredible recovery had been the first open manifestation of the way it worked. Not that she had tried it on him first. Before she dared do that once she had proved it on herself twenty times. She had proved it up to the hilt.

But to ensure continuous results it had to be a continuous process; and in order to give herself up to it, to him (to his pitiful case), she had lately, as her friends said, "cut herself completely off." She had gone down into Buckinghamshire and taken a small solitary house at Sarratt End in the valley of the Chess, three miles from the nearest station. She had shut herself up in a world half a mile long, one straight hill to the north, one to the south, two strips of flat pasture, the river and the white farm-road between. A world closed east and west by the turn the valley takes there

between the hills, and barred by a gate at each end of the farm-road. A land of pure curves, of delicate colours, delicate shadows; all winter through a land of grey woods and sallow fields, of ploughed hillsides pale with the white strain of the chalk. In April (it was April now) a land shining with silver and with green. And the ways out of it led into lanes; it had neither sight nor hearing of the high roads beyond.

There were only two houses in that half-mile of valley. Agatha's house and Woodman's Farm.

Agatha's house, white as a cutting in the chalk downs, looked south-west, up the valley and across it, to where a slender beech wood went lightly up the hill and then stretched out in a straight line along the top, with the bare fawn-coloured flank of the ploughed land below. The farm-house looked east towards Agatha's house across a field; a red-brick house—dull, dark red with the grey bloom of weather on it—flat-faced and flat-eyed, two windows on each side of the door and a row of five above, all nine staring at the small white house across the field. The narrow, flat farm-road linked the two.

Except Rodney when his inn was full, nobody ever came to Woodman's Farm; and Agatha's house, set down inside its east gate, shared its isolation, its immunity. Two villages, unseen, unheard, served her, not a mile away. It was impossible to be more sheltered, more protected and more utterly cut off. And only fifteen miles, as the crow flies, between this solitude and London, so that it was easy for Rodney Lanyon to come down.

At two o'clock, the hour when he must come if he were coming, she began to listen for the click of the latch at the garden gate. She had agreed with herself that at the last moment expectancy could do no harm; it couldn't influence him; for either he had taken the twelve-thirty train at Marylebone or he had not (Agatha was so far reasonable); so at the last moment she permitted herself that dangerous and terrible joy.

When the click came and his footsteps after it, she admitted further (now when it could do no harm) that she had had foreknowledge of him; she had been aware all the time that he would come. And she wondered, as she always wondered at his coming, whether really she would find him well, or whether this time it had incredibly miscarried. And her almost unbearable joy became suspense, became vehement desire to see him and gather from his face whether this time also it had worked.

"How are you? How have you been?" was her question when he stood before her in her white room, holding her hand for an instant.

"Tremendously fit," he answered; "ever since I last saw you."

"Oh—seeing me——" It was as if she wanted him to know that seeing her made no difference.

She looked at him and received her certainty. She saw him clear-eyed and young, younger than he was, his clean, bronzed face set, as it used to be, in a firmness that obliterated the lines, the little agonised lines, that had made her heart ache.

"It always does me good," he said, "to see you."

"And to see you—you know what it does to me."

He thought he knew as he caught back his breath and looked at her, taking in again her fine whiteness, and her tenderness, her purity of line, and the secret of her eyes whose colour (if they had colour) he was never sure about; taking in all of her, from her adorable feet to her hair, vividly dark, that sprang from the white parting like—was it like waves or wings?

What had once touched and moved him unspeakably in Agatha's face was the capacity it had, latent in its tragic lines, for expressing terror. Terror was what he most dreaded for her, what he had most tried to keep her from, to keep out of her face. And latterly he had not found it; or rather he had not found the unborn, lurking spirit of it there. It had gone, that little tragic droop in Agatha's face. The corners of her eyes and of her beautiful mouth were lifted; as if by—he could find no other word for the thing he meant but wings. She had a look which, if it were not of joy, was of something more vivid and positive than peace.

He put it down to their increased and undisturbed communion made possible by her retirement to Sarratt End. Yet as he looked at her he sighed again.

In response to his sigh she asked suddenly, "How's Bella?"

His face lighted wonderfully. "It's extraordinary," he said; "she's better. Miles better. In fact, if it was not tempting Providence, I should say she was well. She's been, for the last week anyhow, a perfect angel."

His amazed, uncomprehending look gave her the clue to what had happened. It was another instance of the astounding and mysterious way it worked. She must have got at Bella somehow in getting at him. She saw now no end to the possibilities of the thing. There wasn't anything so wonderful in making him what, after all, he was; but if she, Bella, had been, even for a week, a perfect angel, it had made her what she was not and never had been.

His next utterance came to her with no irrelevance.

"You've been found out."

For a moment she wondered, had he guessed it then, her secret? He had never known anything about it, and it was not likely that he should know now. He was indeed very far from knowing when he could think that it was seeing her that did it.

There was, of course, the other secret, the fact that he did see her; but she had never allowed that it *was* a secret, or that it need be, although they guarded it so carefully. Anybody except Bella, who wouldn't understand it, was welcome to know that he came to see her. He must mean that.

"Found out?" she repeated.

"If you haven't been, you will be."

"You mean," she said, "Sarratt End has been found out?"

"If you put it that way. I saw the Powells at the station."

(She breathed freely).

"They told me they'd taken rooms at some farm here."

"Which farm?"

He didn't remember.

"Was it Woodman's Farm?" she asked. And he said, Yes, that was the name they'd told him. Whereabouts was it?

"Don't you know," she said. That's the name of *your* Farm."

He had not known it, and was visibly annoyed at knowing it now. And Agatha herself felt some dismay. If it had been any other place but Woodman's Farm! It stared at them; it watched them; it knew all their goings out and their comings in; it knew Rodney; not that that had mattered in the least, but the Powells, when they came, would know too.

She tried to look as if that didn't matter either, while they faced each other in a silence, a curious, unfamiliar discomposure.

She recovered first. "After all," she said, "why shouldn't they?"

"Well—I thought you weren't going to tell people."

Her face mounted a sudden flame, a signal of resentment. She had always resented the imputation of secrecy in their relations. And now it was as if he were dragging forward the thought that she perpetually put away from her.

"Tell about what?" she asked, coldly.

"About Sarratt End. I thought we'd agreed to keep it for ourselves."

"I haven't told everybody. But I did tell Milly Powell."

"My dear girl, that wasn't very clever of you."

"I told her not to tell. She knows what I want to be alone for."

"Good God!" As he stared in dismay at what he judged to be her unspeakable indiscretion, the thought rushed in on her straight from him, the naked, terrible thought, that there *should* be anything they had to hide, they had to be alone for. She saw at the same time how defenceless he was before it; he couldn't keep it back; he couldn't put it away from him. It was always with him, a danger watching on his threshold.

"Then" (he made her face it with him), "we're done for."

"No, no," she cried. "How could you think that? It was another thing. Something that I'm trying to do."

"You told her," he insisted. "What did you tell her?"

"That I'm doing it. That I'm here for my health. She understands it that way."

He smiled as if he were satisfied, knowing her so well. And still his thought, his terrible naked thought, was there. It was looking at her straight out of his eyes.

"Are you sure she understands?" he said.

"Yes. Absolutely."

He hesitated, and then put it differently.

"Are you sure she doesn't understand? That she hasn't an inkling?"

He was'nt sure whether Agatha understood, whether she realised the danger.

"About you and me," he said.

"Ah, my dear, I've kept *you* secret. She doesn't know we know each other. And if she did——"

She finished it with a wonderful look, a look of unblinking yet vaguely, pitifully uncandid candour.

She had always met him, and would always have to meet him with the idea that there was nothing in it; for, if she once admitted that there was anything, then they *were* done for. She couldn't (how could she?) let him keep on coming with that thought in him, acknowledged by them both.

That was where she came in and where her secret, her gift, would work now more beneficently than ever. The beauty of it was that it would make them safe, absolutely safe. She had only got to apply it to that thought of his, and the thought would not exist. Since she could get at him, she could do for him what he, poor dear, could not perhaps always do for himself; she could keep that dreadful possibility in him under; she could in fact, make their communion all that she most wanted it to be.

"I don't like it," he said, miserably. "I don't like it."

A little line of worry was coming in his face again.

The door opened and a maid began to go in and out, laying the table for their meal. He watched the door close on her and said, "Won't that woman wonder what I come for?"

"She can see what you come for." She smiled. "Why are you spoiling it with thinking things?"

"It's for you I think them. I don't mind. It doesn't matter so much for me. But I want you to be safe."

"Oh, *I'm* safe, my dear," she answered.

"You were. And you would be still, if these Powells hadn't found you out."

He meditated.

"What do you suppose *they've* come for?" he asked.

"They've come, I imagine, for his health."

"What? To a god-forsaken place like this?"

"They know what it's done for me. So they think, poor darlings, perhaps it may do something—even yet—for him."

"What's the matter with him?"

"Something dreadful. And they say—incurable."

"It isn't——?" He paused.

"I can't tell you what it is. It isn't anything you'd think it was. It isn't anything bodily."

"I never knew it."

"You're not supposed to know. And you wouldn't, unless you *did* know. And please—you don't; you don't know anything."

He smiled. "No. You haven't told me, have you?"

"I only told you because you never tell things, and because——"

"Because?" He waited, smiling.

"Because I wanted you to see he doesn't count."

"Well—but *she's* all right, I take it?"

At first she failed to grasp his implication that if, owing to his affliction, Harding Powell didn't count, Milly, his young wife did. Her faculties of observation and of inference would, he took it, be unimpaired.

"*She'll* wonder, won't she?" he expounded.

"About us? Not she. She's too much wrapped up in him to notice anyone."

"And he?"

"Oh, my dear—He's too much wrapped up in *it*."

Another anxiety then came to him.

"I say, you know, he isn't dangerous, is he?"

She laughed.

"Dangerous? Oh dear me, no! A lamb."

II

She kept on saying to herself, Why shouldn't they come? What difference did it make?

Up till now she had not admitted that anything could make a difference, that anything could touch, could alter by a shade the safe, the intangible, the unique relation between her and Rodney. It was proof

against anything that anybody could think. And the Powells were not given to thinking things. Agatha's own mind had been a crystal without a flaw, in its clearness, its sincerity.

It had to be to ensure the blessed working of the gift; as again, it was by the blessed working of the gift that she had kept it so. She could only think of that, the secret, the gift, the inexpressible thing, as itself a flawless crystal, a charmed circle; or rather, as a sphere that held all the charmed circles that you draw round things to keep them safe, to keep them holy.

She had drawn her circle round Rodney Lanyon and herself. Nobody could break it. They were supernaturally safe.

And yet the presence of the Powells had made a difference. She was forced to own that, though she remained untouched, it had made a difference in him. It was as if, in the agitation produced by them, he had brushed aside some veil and had let her see something that up till now her crystal vision had refused to see, something that was more than a lurking possibility. She discovered in him a desire, an intention that up till now he had concealed from her. It had left its hiding place; it rose on terrifying wings and fluttered before her, troubling her. She was reminded that, though there were no lurking possibilities in her, with him it might be different. For him the tie between them might come to mean something that it had never meant and could not mean for her, something that she had refused not only to see but to forsee and provide for.

She was aware of a certain relief when Monday came and he had left her without any further unveilings and revealings. She was even glad when, about the middle of the week, the Powells came with a cart-load of luggage and settled at the Farm. She said to herself that they would take her mind off him. They had a way of seizing on her and holding her attention to the exclusion of all other objects.

She could hardly not have been seized and held by a case so pitiful, so desperate as theirs. How pitiful and desperate it had become she learned almost at once from the face of her friend, the little pale-eyed wife, whose small, flat, flower-like features were washed out and worn fine by watchings and listenings on the border, on the threshold.

Yes, he was worse. He had had to give up his business (Harding Powell was a gentle stock-broker). It wasn't any longer, Milly Powell intimated, a question of borders and of thresholds. They had passed all that. He had gone clean over; he was in the dreadful interior; and she, the resolute and vigilant little woman, had no longer any power to get him out. She was at the end of her tether.

Agatha knew what he had been for years? Well—he was worse than that; far worse than he had been, ever. Not so bad though that he hadn't intervals in which he knew how bad he was, and was willing to do everything, to try anything. They were going to try Sarratt End. It was her idea. She knew how marvellously it had answered with dear Agatha (not that Agatha ever was, or could be, where *he* was, poor darling). And besides, Agatha herself was an attraction. It had occurred to Milly Powell that it might do Harding good to be near Agatha. There was something about her; Milly didn't know what it was, but she felt it, *he* felt it—an influence or something, that made for mental peace. It was, Mrs. Powell said, as if she had some secret.

She hoped Agatha wouldn't mind. It couldn't possibly hurt her. *He* couldn't. The darling couldn't hurt a fly; he could only hurt himself. And if he got really bad, why then, of course, they would have to leave Sarratt End. He would have, she said sadly, to go away somewhere. But not yet—oh, not yet; he wasn't bad enough for that. She would keep him with her up to the last possible moment—the last possible moment. Agatha could understand, couldn't she?

Agatha did indeed.

Milly Powell smiled her desperate white smile, and went on, always with her air of appeal to Agatha. That was why she wanted to be near her. It was awful not to be near somebody who understood, who would understand him. For Agatha would understand—wouldn't she?—that to a certain extent he must be given in to? *That*—apart from Agatha—was why they had chosen Sarratt End. It was the sort of place—wasn't it?—where you would go if you didn't want people to get at you, where (Milly's very voice became furtive as she explained it) you could hide. His idea—his last—seemed to be that something *was* trying to get at him.

No, not people. Something worse, something terrible. It was always after him. The most piteous thing about him—piteous but adorable—was that he came to her—to *her*—imploring her to hide him.

And so she had hidden him here.

Agatha took in her friend's high courage as she looked at the eyes where fright barely fluttered under the poised suspense. She approved of the plan. It appealed to her by its sheer audacity. She murmured that, if there were anything that she could do, Milly had only to come to her.

Oh well, Milly *had* come. What she wanted Agatha to do—if she saw him and he should say anything about it—was simply to take the line that he was safe.

Agatha said that was the line she did take. She wasn't going to let herself think, and Milly mustn't think—not for a moment—that he wasn't, that there was anything to be afraid of.

"Anything to be afraid of *here*. That's my point," said Milly.

"Mine is that here or anywhere—wherever *he* is—there mustn't be any fear. How can he get better if we keep him wrapped in it? You're *not* afraid. You're *not* afraid."

Persistent, invincible affirmation was part of her method, her secret.

Milly replied a little wearily (she knew nothing about the method).

"I haven't time to be afraid," she said. "And as long as you're not——"

"It's you who matter," Agatha cried. "You're so near him. Don't you realise what it means to be so near?"

Milly smiled sadly, tenderly. (As if she didn't know!)

"My dear, that's all that keeps me going. I've got to make him feel that he's protected."

"He *is* protected," said Agatha.

Already she was drawing her charmed circle round him.

"As long as I hold out. If I give in he's done for."

"You mustn't think it. You mustn't say it!"

"But—I know it. Oh my dear! I'm all he's got."

At that she looked for a moment as if she might break down. She said the terrible part of it was that they were left so much alone. People were beginning to shrink from him, to be afraid of him.

"You know," said Agatha, "I'm not. You must bring him to see me."

The little women had risen, as she said, "to go to him." She stood there, visibly hesitating. She couldn't bring him. He wouldn't come. Would Agatha go with her and see him?

Agatha went.

As they approached the Farm she saw to her amazement that the door was shut and the blinds, the ugly, ochreish yellow blinds, were down in all the nine windows of the front, the windows of the Powell's rooms. The house was like a house of the dead.

"Do you get the sun on this side?" she said; and as she said it she realised the stupidity of her question; for the nine windows looked to the east, and the sun, wheeling down the west, had been in their faces as they came.

Milly answered mechanically, "No, we don't get any sun." She added with an irrelevance that was only apparent, "I've had to take al four rooms to keep other people out."

"They never come," said Agatha.

"No," said Milly, "but if they did——!"

The front door was locked. Milly had the key. When they had entered Agatha saw her turn it in the lock again, slowly and without a sound.

All the doors were shut in the passage, and it was dark there. Milly opened a door on the left at the foot of the steep stairs.

"He will be in here," she said.

The large room was lit with a thick ochreish light through the squares of its drawn blinds. It ran the whole width of the house and had a third window looking west where the yellow light prevailed. A horrible light it was. It cast thin, turbid, brown shadows on the walls.

Harding Powell was sitting between the drawn blinds, alone in the black hollow of the chimney place. He crouched in his chair and his bowed back was towards them as they stood there on the threshold.

"Harding," said Milly, "Agatha has come to see you."

He turned in his chair and rose as they entered.

His chin was sunk on his chest, and the first thing Agatha noticed was the difficult, slow, forward-thrusting movement with which he lifted it. His eyes seemed to come up last of all from the depths to meet her. With a peculiar foreign courtesy he bowed his head again over her hand as he held it.

He apologised for the darkness in which they found him. Harding Powell's manners had always been perfect, and it struck Agatha as strange and pathetic that his malady should have left untouched the incomparable quality he had.

Milly went to the windows and drew the blinds up. The light revealed him in his exquisite perfection, his small fragile finish. He was fifty or thereabouts, but slight as a boy, and nervous, and dark as Englishmen are dark; jaw and chin shaven; his mouth hidden by the straight droop of his moustache. From the eyes downwards the outlines of his face and features were of an exteme regularity and a fineness undestroyed by the work of the strained nerves on the sallow, delicate texture. But his eyes, dark like an animal's, were the eyes of a terrified thing, a thing hunted and on the watch, a thing that listened continually for the soft feet of the hunter Above these eyes his brows were twisted, were tortured with his terror.

He turned to his wife.

"Did you lock the door, dear?" he said.

"I did. But you know, Harding, we needn't—here."

He shivered slightly and began to walk up and down before the hearth-place. When he had his back to Milly, Milly followed him with her eyes of anguish; when he turned and faced her, she met him with her white smile.

Presently he spoke again. He wondered whether they would object to his drawing the blinds down. He was afraid he would have to. Otherwise, he said, *he would be seen.*

Milly laid her hand on the arm that he stretched towards the window.

"Darling," she said, "You've forgotten. You can't possibly be seen—here. It's just the one place—isn't it, Agatha?—where you can't be." Her eyes signalled to Agatha to support her. (Not but what she had perfect confidence in the plan.)

It was, Agatha assented. "And Agatha knows," said Milly.

He shivered again. He had turned to Agatha.

"Forgive me if I suggest that you cannot really know. Heaven forbid that you *should* know."

Milly, intent on her "plan," persisted.

"But dearest, you said yourself it was. The one place."

"*I* said that? When did I say it?"

"Yesterday."

"Yesterday? I daresay. But I didn't sleep last night. It wouldn't let me."

"Very few people do sleep," said Agatha, "for the first time in a strange place."

"The place isn't strange. That's what I complain of. That's what keeps me awake. No place ever will be strange when It's there. And It was there last night."

"Darling——" Milly murmured.

"You know what I mean," he said. "The Thing that keeps me awake. Of course if I'd slept last night I'd have known it wasn't there. But when I didn't sleep—"

He left it to them to draw the only possible conclusion.

They dropped the subject. They turned to other things and talked a little while, sitting with him in his room with the drawn blinds. From time to time when they appealed to him, he gave an urbane assent, a murmur, a suave motion of his hand. When the light went they lit a lamp. Agatha stayed and dined with them, that being the best thing she could do.

At nine o'clock she rose and said good-night to Harding Powell. He smiled a drawn smile.

"Ah—if I could sleep——" he said.

"That's the worst of it—his not sleeping," said Milly at the gate.

"He will sleep. He will sleep," said Agatha.

Milly sighed. She knew he wouldn't.

The plan, she said, was no good after all. It wouldn't work.

III

How could it? There was nothing behind it. All Milly's plans had been like that; they fell to dust; they *were* dust. They had been always that pitiful. desperate stirring of the dust to hide the terror, the futile throwing of the dust in the poor thing's eyes. As if he couldn't see through

it. As if, with the supernatural lucidity, the invincible cunning of the insane, he didn't see through anything and provide for it. It was really only his indestructible urbanity, persisting through the wreck of him, that bore, tolerantly, temperately, with Milly and her plans. Without it he might be dangerous. With it, as long as it lasted, little Milly, plan as she would, was safe.

But they couldn't count on its lasting. Agatha had realised that from the moment when she had seen him draw down the blind again after his wife had drawn it up. That was the maddest thing he had done yet. She had shuddered at it as at an act of violence. It outraged, cruelly, his exquisite quality. It was so unlike him.

She was not sure that Milly hadn't even made things worse by her latest plan, the flight to Sarratt End. It emphasised the fact that they were flying, that they had to fly. It had brought her to the house with the drawn blinds in the closed, barred valley, to the end of the world, to the end of her tether. And when she realised that it *was* the end—when he realised it...

Agatha couldn't leave him there. She couldn't (when she had the secret) leave him to poor Milly and her plans. That had been in her mind when she had insisted on it that he would sleep.

She knew what Milly meant by her sigh and the look she gave her. If Milly could have been impolite she would have told her that it was all very well to say so, but how were they going to make him? And she too felt that something more was required of her than that irritating affirmation. She had got to make him. His case, his piteous case, cried out for an extension of the gift.

She hadn't any doubt as to its working. There were things she didn't know about it yet, but she was sure of that. She had proved it by a hundred experimental intermissions, abstentions, and recoveries. In order to be sure you had only to let go and see how you got on without it. She had tried in that way, with scepticism and precaution, on herself.

But not in the beginning. She could not say that she had tried it in the beginning at all, even on herself. It had simply come to her, as she put it, by a divine accident. Heaven knew she had needed it. She had been, like Rodney Lanyon, on the verge, where he, poor dear, had brought her; so impossible had it been then to bear her knowledge and, what was worse, her divination of the things he bore from Bella. It was her divination, her compassion, that had wrecked her as she stood aside, cut off from him, he on the verge and she near it, looking on, powerless to help while Bella tore at him. Talk of the verge, the wonder was they hadn't gone clean over it, both of them.

She couldn't say then from what region, what tract of unexplored, incredible mystery her help had come. It came one day, one night when she was at her worst. She remembered how with some resurgent, ultimate instinct of surrender she had sunk on the floor of her room, flung out her arms across the bed in the supreme gesture of supplication, and thus gone, eyes shut and with no motion of thought or sense in her, clean into the blackness where, as if it had been waiting for her, the thing had found her.

It had found her. Agatha was precise on that point. She had not found it. She had not even stumbled on it, blundered up against it in the blackness. The way it worked, the wonder of her instantaneous well-being had been the first, the very first hint she had that it was there.

She had never quite recaptured her primal, virgin sense of it; but, to set against that, she had entered more and more into possession. She had found out the secret of its working and had controlled it, reduced it to an almost intelligible method. You could think of it as a current of transcendent power, hitherto mysteriously inhibited. You made the connection, having cut off all other currents that interfered, and then you simply turned it on. In other words, if you could put it into words at all, you shut your eyes and ears, you closed up the sense of touch, you made everything dark around you and withdrew into your innermost self; you burrowed deep into the darkness there till you got beyond it; you tapped the Power as it were underground at any point you pleased and turned it on in any direction.

She could turn it on to Harding Powell without any loss to Rodney Lanyon; for it was immeasurable, inexhaustible.

She looked back at the farm-house with its veiled windows. Formless and immense, the shadow of Harding Powell swayed uneasily on one of the yellow blinds. Across the field her own house showed pure and dim against the darkening slope behind it, showed a washed and watered white in the liquid, lucid twilight. Her house was open always and on every side; it flung out its casement arms to the night and to the day. And now all the lamps were lit, every doorway was a golden shaft, every window a golden square; the whiteness of its walls quivered and the blurred edges flowed into the dark of the garden. It was the fragile shell of a sacred and a burning light.

She did not go in all at once. She crossed the river and went up the hill through the beech-wood. She walked there every evening in the darkness, calling her thoughts home to sleep. The Easter moon, golden-white and holy, looked down at her, shrined under the long sharp arch of the beech-trees; it was like going up and up towards a dim sanctuary where the holiest sat enthroned. A sense of consecration was upon her. It came, solemn and pure and still, out of the tumult of her tenderness and pity; but it was too awful for pity and for tenderness; it aspired like a flame and lost itself in light; it grew like a wave till it was vaster than any tenderness or any pity. It was as if her heart rose on the swell of it and was carried away into a rhythm so tremendous that her own pulses of compassion were no longer felt, or felt only as the hushed and delicate vibration of the wave. She recognised her state. It was the blessed state desired as the condition of the working of the gift.

She turned when the last arch of the beech-trees broke and opened to the sky at the top of the hill, where the moon hung in immensity, free of her hill, free of the shrine that held her. She went down with slow soft footsteps as if she carried herself, her whole fragile being, as a vessel, a crystal vessel for the holy thing, and was careful lest a touch of the earth should jar and break her.

IV

She went still more gently and with half-shut eyes through her illuminated house. She turned the lights out in her room and undressed herself in the darkness. She laid herself on the bed with straight lax limbs, with arms held apart a little from her body, with eyelids shut lightly on her eyes; all fleshly contacts were diminished.

It was now as if her being drank at every pore the swimming darkness; as if the rhythm of her heart and of her breath had ceased in the pulse of its invasion. She sank in it and was covered with wave upon

wave of darkness. She sank and was upheld; she dissolved and was gathered together again, a flawless crystal. She was herself the heart of the charmed circle, poised in the ultimate unspeakable stillness, beyond death, beyond birth, beyond the movements, the vehemences, the agitations of the world. She drew Harding Powell into it and held him there.

To draw him to any purpose she had first to loosen and destroy the fleshly, sinister image of him that, for the moment of evocation, hung like a picture on the darkness. In a moment the fleshly image receded, it sank back into the darkness. His name, Harding Powell, was now the only earthly sign of him that she suffered to appear. In the third moment his name was blotted out. And then it was as if she drew him by intangible, supersensible threads; she touched, with no sense of peril, his innermost essence; the walls of flesh were down between them; she had got at him.

And having got at him she held him, a bloodless spirit, a bodiless essence, in the fount of healing. She said to herself, "He will sleep now. He will sleep. He will sleep." And as she slid into her own sleep she held and drew him with her.

He would sleep; he would be all right as long as *she* slept. Her sleep, she had discovered, did more than carry on the amazing act of communion and redemption. It clinched it. It was the seal on the bond.

Early the next morning she went over to the Farm. The blinds were up; the doors and windows were flung open. Milly met her at the garden gate. She stopped her and walked a little way with her across the field. "It's worked," she said. "It's worked after all, like magic."

For a moment Agatha wondered whether Milly had guessed anything; whether she divined the Secret and had brought him there for that, and had refused to acknowledge it before she knew.

"What has?" she asked.

"The plan. The place. He slept last night. Ten hours straight on end. I know, for I stayed awake and watched him. And this morning—oh, my dear, if you could see him! He's all right. He's all right."

"And you think," said Agatha, "it's the place?"

Milly knew nothing, guessed, divined nothing.

"Why, what else can it be?" she said.

"What does *he* think?"

"He doesn't think. He can't account for it. He says himself it's miraculous."

"Perhaps," said Agatha, "it is."

They were silent a moment over the wonder of it.

"I can't get over it," said Milly, presently. "It's so odd that it should make all that difference. I could understand it if it had worked that way at first. But it didn't. Think of him yesterday. And yet—if it isn't the place, what is it? What is it?"

Agatha did not answer. She wasn't going to tell Milly what it was. If she did Milly wouldn't believe her, and Milly's unbelief might work against it. It might prove, for all she knew, an inimical, disastrous power.

"Come and see for yourself." Milly spoke as if it had been Agatha who doubted.

They turned again towards the house. Powell had come out and was in the garden, leaning on the gate. They could see how right he was by the mere fact of his being there, presenting himself like that to the vivid light.

He opened the gate for them, raising his hat and smiling as they came. His face witnessed to the wonder worked on him. The colour showed

clean, purged of his taint. His eyes were candid and pure under brows smoothed by sleep.

As they went in he stood for a moment in the open doorway and looked at the view, admiring the river and the green valley, and the bare upland fields under the wood. He had always had (it was part of his rare quality) a prodigious capacity for admiration.

"My God," he said, "how beautiful the world is!"

He looked at Milly. "And all *that* isn't a patch on my wife."

He looked at her with tenderness and admiration, and the look was the flower, the perfection of his sanity.

Milly drew in her breath with a little sound like a sob. Her joy was so great that it was almost unbearable.

Then he looked at Agatha and admired the green gown she wore. "You don't know," he said, "how exquisitely right you are."

She smiled. She knew how exquisitely right *he* was.

V

Night after night she continued, and without an effort. It was as easy as drawing your breath; it was indeed the breath you drew. She found that she had no longer to devote hours to Harding Powell, any more than she gave hours to Rodney; she could do his business in moments, in points of inappreciable time. If was as if from night to night the times swung together and made one enduring timeless time. For the process belonged to a region that was not of times or time.

She wasn't afraid, then, of not giving enough time to it, but she *was* afraid of omitting it altogether. She knew that every intermission would be followed by a relapse, and Harding's state did not admit of any relapses.

Of course, if time *had* counted, if the thing was measurable, she would have been afraid of losing hold of Rodney Lanyon. She held him now by a single slender thread, and the thread was Bella. She "worked" it regularly now through Bella. He was bound to be all right as long as Bella was; for his possibilities of suffering were thus cut off at their source. Besides, it was the only way to preserve the purity of her intention, the flawlessness of the crystal.

That was the blessedness of her attitude to Harding Powell. It was passionless, impersonal. She wanted nothing of Harding Powell except to help him, and to help Milly, dear little Milly. And never before had she been given so complete, so overwhelming a sense of having helped. It was nothing—unless it was a safeguard against vanity—that they didn't know it, that they persisted in thinking that it was Milly's plan that worked.

Not that that altogether accounted for it to Harding Powell. He said so at last to Agatha.

They were returning, he and she, by the edge of the wood at the top of the steep field after a long walk. He had asked her to go with him—it was her country—for a good stretch, further than Milly's little feet could carry her. They stood a moment up there and looked around them. April was coming on, but the ploughed land at their feet was still bare; the earth waited. On that side of the valley she was delicately unfruitful, spent with rearing the fine, thin beauty of the woods. But, down below, the valley ran over with young grass and poured it to the river in wave after wave, till the last surge of green rounded over the water's edge. Rain had fallen in the night, and the river had risen; it rested there, poised. It was wonderful how a thing so brimming, so shining, so alive could be so still; still as marsh water, flat to the flat land.

At that moment, in a flash that came like a shifting of her eyes, the world she looked at suffered a change.

And yet it did not change. All the appearances of things, their colours, the movement and the stillness remained as if constant in their rhythm and their scale; but they were heightened, intensified; they were carried to a pitch that would have been vehement, vibrant, but that the stillness as well as the movement was intense. She was not dazzled by it or confused in any way. Her senses were exalted, adjusted to the pitch.

She would have said now that the earth at her feet had become insubstantial, but that she knew, in her flash, that what she saw was the very substance of the visible world; live and subtle as flame; solid as crystal and as clean. It was the same world, flat field for flat field and hill for hill; but radiant, vibrant, and, as it were, infinitely transparent.

Agatha in her moment saw that the whole world brimmed and shone and was alive with the joy that was its life, joy that flowed flood-high and yet was still. In every leaf, in every blade of grass, this life was manifest as a strange, a divine translucence. She was about to point it out to the man at her side when she remembered that he had eyes for the beauty of the earth, but no sense of its secret and supernatural light. Harding Powell denied, he always had denied the supernatural. And when she turned to him her vision had passed from her.

They must have another tramp some day, he said. He wanted to see more of this wonderful place. And then he spoke of his recovery.

"It's all very well," he said, "but I can't account for it. Milly says it's the place."

"It *is* a wonderful place," said Agatha.

"Not so wonderful as all that. You saw how I was the day after we came. Well—it can't be the place altogether."

"I rather hope it isn't," Agatha said.

"Do you? What do you think it is, then?"

"I think it's something in you."

"Of course, of course. But what started it? That's what I want to know. Something's happened. Something queer and spontaneous and unaccountable. It's—it's uncanny. For, you know, I oughtn't to feel like this. I got bad news this morning."

"Bad news?"

"Yes. My sister's little girl is very ill. They think it's meningitis. They're in awful trouble. And *I—I'm* feeling like this.

"Don't let it distress you."

"It doesn't distress me. It only puzzles me. That's the odd thing. Of course, I'm sorry and I'm anxious and all that; but I *feel* so well."

"You *are* well. Don't be morbid."

"I haven't told my wife yet. About the child, I mean. I simply daren't. It'll frighten her. She won't know how I'll take it, and she'll think it'll make me go all queer again."

He paused and turned to her.

"I say, if she *did* know how I'm taking it, she'd think *that* awfully queer, wouldn't she?" He paused.

"The worst of it is," he said, "I've got to tell her."

"Will you leave it to me," Agatha said. "I think I can make it all right."

"How?" he queried.

"Never mind how. I can."

"Well," he assented, "there's hardly anything you can't do."

That was how she came to tell Milly.

She made up her mind to tell her that evening as they sat alone in Agatha's house. Harding, Milly said, was happy over there with his books; just as he used to be, only more so. So much more so that she was a little disturbed about it. She was afraid it wouldn't last. And again she said it was the place, the wonderful, wonderful place.

"If you want it to last," Agatha said, "don't go on thinking it's the place."

"Why shouldn't it be? I feel that he's safe here. He's out of it. Things can't reach him."

"Bad news reached him to-day."

"Aggy—what?" Milly whispered in her fright.

"His sister is very anxious about her little girl."

"What's wrong?"

Agatha repeated what she had heard from Harding Powell.

"Oh——" Milly was dumb for an instant while she thought of her sister-in-law. Then she cried aloud.

"If the child dies it will make him ill again!"

"No Milly, it won't."

"It will, I tell you. It's always been that sort of thing that does it."

"And supposing there was something that keeps it off?"

"What is there? What is there?"

"I believe there's something. Would you mind awfully if it wasn't the place?"

"What do you mean, Agatha?" (There was a faint resentment in Milly's agonised tone.)

It was then that Agatha told her. She made it out for her as far as she had made it out at all, with the diffidence that a decent attitude required.

Milly raised doubts which subsided in a kind of awe when Agatha faced her with the evidence of dates.

"You remember, Milly, the night when he slept."

"I do remember. He said himself it was miraculous."

She meditated.

"And so you think it's that?" she said presently.

"I do indeed. If I dared leave off (I daren't) you'd see for yourself."

"What do you think you've got hold of?"

"I don't know yet."

There was a long deep silence which Milly broke.

"What do you *do*?" she said.

"I don't do anything. It isn't me."

"I see," said Milly. "*I've* prayed. You didn't think I hadn't?"

"It's not that—not anything you mean by it. And yet it is; only it's more, much more. I can't explain it. I only know it isn't me."

She was beginning to feel vaguely uncomfortable about having told her.

"And Milly, you mustn't tell him. Promise me you won't tell him."

"No, I won't tell him."

"Because you see, he'd think it was all rot."

"He would," said Milly. "It's the sort of thing he does think rot."

"And that might prevent its working."

Milly smiled faintly. "I haven't the ghost of an idea what 'it' is. But whatever it is, can you go on doing it?"

"Yes, I think so. You see, it depends rather——."

"It depends on what?"

"Oh, on a lot of things—on your sincerity; on your—your purity. It depends so much on *that* that it frightens you lest, perhaps, you mightn't, after all, be so very pure."

Milly smiled again, a little differently. "Darling, if that's all, I'm not frightened. Only—supposing—supposing you gave out? You might, you know."

"*I* might. But It couldn't. You mustn't think it's me, Milly. Because if anything happened to me, if I did give out, don't you see how it would let him down? It's as bad as thinking it's the place."

"Does it matter what it is—or who it is," said Milly, passionately; "as long as——" Her tears came and stopped her.

Agatha divined the source of Milly's passion.

"Then you don't mind, Milly? You'll let me go on?"

Milly rose; she turned abruptly, holding her head high, so that she might not spill her tears.

Agatha went with her over the grey field towards the Farm. They paused at the gate. Milly spoke.

"Are you sure?" she said.

"Certain."

"And you won't leave go?" Her eyes shone towards her friend's in the twilight. "You *will* go on?"

"*You* must go on."

"Ah—how?"

"Believing that he'll be all right."

"Oh, Aggy, he was devoted to Winny. And if the child dies——"

VI

The child died three days later. Milly came over to Agatha with the news.

She said it had been an awful shock, of course. She'd been dreading something like that for him. But he'd taken it wonderfully. If he came out of it all right she *would* believe in what she called Agatha's "thing."

He did come out of it all right. His behaviour was the crowning proof, if Milly wanted more proof, of his sanity. He went up to London and made all the arrangements for his sister. When he returned he forestalled Milly's specious consolations with the truth. It was better, he told her, that the dear little girl should have died, for there was distinct brain trouble anyway. He took it as a sane man takes a terrible alternative.

Weeks passed. He had grown accustomed to his own sanity and no longer marvelled at it.

And still without intermission Agatha went on. She had been so far affected by Milly's fright (that was the worst of Milly's knowing) that she held on to Harding Powell with a slightly exaggerated intensity. She even began to give more and more time to him, she who had made out that time in this process did not matter. She was afraid of letting go, because the consequences (Milly was perpetually reminding her of the consequences) of letting go would be awful.

For Milly kept her at it. Milly urged her on. Milly, in Milly's own words, sustained her. She praised her; she praised the Secret, praised the Power. She said you could see how it worked. It was tremendous;

it was inexhaustible. Milly, familiarised with its working, had become a fanatical believer in the Power. But she had her own theory. She knew of course that they were all, she and Agatha and poor Harding, dependent on the Power, that it was the Power that did it, and not Agatha. But Agatha was *their* one link with it, and if the link gave way where were they? Agatha felt that Milly watched her and waylaid her; that she was suspicious of failures and of intermissions; that she wondered; that she peered and pried. Milly would, if she could, have stuck her fingers into what she called the machinery of the thing. Its vagueness baffled and even annoyed her, for her mind was limited; it loved and was at home with limits; it desired above all things precise ideas, names, phrases, anything that constricted and defined.

But still, with it all, she believed; and the great thing was that Milly *should* believe. She might have worked havoc if, with her temperament, she had doubted.

What did suffer was the fine poise with which she, Agatha, had held Rodney Lanyon and Harding Powell each by his own thread. Milly had compelled her to spin a stronger thread for Harding and, as it were, to multiply her threads, so as to hold him at all points. And because of this, because of giving more and more time to him, she could not always loose him from her and let him go. And she was afraid lest the pull he had on her might weaken Rodney's thread.

Up till now, the Powell's third week at Sarratt End, she had had the assurance that his thread still held. She heard from him that Bella was all right, which meant that he too was all right, for there had never been anything wrong with him *but* Bella. And she had a further glimpse of the way the gift worked its wonders.

Three Fridays had passed, and he had not come.

Well—she had meant that; she had tried (on that last Friday of his) with a crystal sincerity, to hold him back so that he should not come. And up till now, with an ease that simply amazed her, she had kept herself at the highest pitch of her sincere and beautiful intention.

Not that it was the intention that had failed her now. It had succeeded so beautifully, so perfectly, that he had no need to come at all. She had given Bella back to him. She had given him back to Bella. Only, she faced the full perfection of her work. She had brought it to so fine a point that she would never see him again; she had gone to the root of it; she had taken from him the desire to see her. And now it was as if subtly, insidiously, her relation to him had become inverted. Whereas hitherto it had been she who had been necessary to him, it seemed now that he was far more, beyond all comparison more necessary to her. After all, Rodney had had Bella; and she had nobody but Rodney. He was the one solitary thing she cared for. And hitherto it had not mattered so immensely, for all her caring, whether he came to her or not. Seeing him had been perhaps a small mortal joy; but it had not been the tremendous and essential thing. She had been contented satisfied beyond all mortal contentments and satisfactions, with the intangible, immaterial tie. Now she longed, with an unendurable longing, for his visible, bodily presence. She had not realised her joy as long as it was with her; she had refused to acknowledge it because of its mortal quality, and it had raised no cry that troubled her abiding spiritual calm. But now that she had put it from her, it thrust itself on her, it cried, it clung piteously to her and would not let her go. She looked back to the last year, her year of Fridays, and saw it following her, following and

entreating. She looked forward and she saw Friday after Friday coming upon her, a procession of pitiless days, trampling it down, her small, piteous mortal joy, and her mortality rose in her and revolted. She had been disturbed by what she had called the "lurking possibilities" in Rodney; they were nothing to the lurking possibilities in her.

There were moments when her desire to see Rodney sickened her with its importunity. Each time she beat it back, in an instant, to its burrow below the threshold, and it hid there, it ran underground. There were ways below the threshold by which desire could get at him. Therefore, one night—Tuesday of the fourth week—she cut him off. She refused to hold him even by a thread. It was Bella and Bella only that she held now.

On Friday of that week she heard from him. Bella was still all right. But *he* wasn't. Anything but. He didn't know what was the matter with him. He supposed it was the same old thing again. He couldn't think how poor Bella stood him, but she did. It must be awfully bad for her. It was beastly, wasn't it? that he should have got like that, just when Bella was so well.

She might have known it. She had in fact known. Having once held him, and having healed him, she had no right—as long as the Power consented to work through her—she had no right to let him go.

She began again from the beginning, from the first process of purification and surrender. But what followed was different now. She had not only to recapture the crystal serenity, the holiness of that state by which she had held Rodney Lanyon and had healed him; she had to recover the poise by which she had held him and Harding Powell together. She was bound equally not to let Harding go.

It was now almost a struggle to concentrate on both Rodney and Harding, a struggle in which Harding persisted and prevailed. Yes, there was no blinking it, he prevailed.

She had been prepared for it, but not as for a thing that could really happen. It was contrary to all that she knew of the beneficent working of the Power. She thought she knew all its ways, its silences, its reassurances, its inexplicable reservations and evasions. She couldn't be prepared for this—that it, the high and holy, the unspeakably pure thing should allow Harding to prevail, should connive (that was what it looked like) at his taking the gift into his own hands and turning it to his own advantage against Rodney Lanyon.

Not that she thought that it really had connived. That was unthinkable, and Agatha did not think these things; she felt them. Hitherto she had no misgivings as to the possible behaviour of the Power; and now she was afraid, not of It, and not, certainly not of poor Harding (how could she be afraid of him?); she was afraid mysteriously, without knowing why or how.

It was her fear that made her write to Rodney Lanyon. She wrote in the beginning of the fifth week (she was counting the weeks now). She only wanted to know, she said, that he was better, that he was well. She begged him to write and tell her that he was well.

He did not write.

And every night of that week, in those "states" of hers, Powell prevailed. He was becoming almost a visible presence impressed upon the blackness of the "state." All she could do then was to evoke the

visible image of Rodney Lanyon and place it there over Harding's image, obliterating him. Now, properly speaking, the state, the perfection of it, did not admit of visible presences, and that Harding could so impress himself showed more than anything the extent to which he had prevailed.

He prevailed to such good purpose that he was now, Milly said, well enough to go back to business. They were to leave Sarratt End in about ten days, when they would have been there seven weeks.

She had come over on the Sunday to let Agatha know that; and also, she said, to make a confession.

Milly's face, as she said it, was all candour. It had filled out; it had bloomed in her happiness; it was shadowless, featureless almost, like a flower.

She had done what she said she wouldn't do; she had told Harding.

"Oh Milly, what on earth did you do that for?" Agatha's voice was strange.

"I thought it better," Milly said, revealing the fine complacence of her character.

"Why better?"

"Because secrecy is bad. And he was beginning to wonder. He wanted to go back to business; and he wouldn't because he thought it was the place that did it."

"I see," said Agatha. "And what does he think it is now?"

"He thinks it's *you*, dear."

"But I told you—I told you—that was what you were not to think."

"My dear, it's an immense concession that he should think it's you."

"A concession to what?"

"Well, I suppose, to the supernatural."

"Milly, you shouldn't have told him. You don't know what harm you might have done. I'm not sure even now that you have not done harm."

"Oh, *have* I!" said Milly, triumphantly. "You've only got to look at him."

"When did you tell him, then?"

"I told him—let me see—it was a week ago last Friday."

Agatha was silent. She wondered. It had been after Friday a week ago that he had prevailed so terribly.

"Agatha," said Milly, solemnly, "when we go away you won't lose sight of him? You won't let go of him?"

"You needn't be afraid. I doubt now if he will let go of me."

"How do you mean—*now*?" Milly flushed slightly as a flower might flush.

"Now that you've told him, now that he thinks it's me."

"Perhaps," said Milly, "that was why I told him. I don't want him to let go."

VII

It was the sixth week, and still Rodney did not write; and Agatha was more and more afraid.

By this time she had definitely connected her fear with Harding Powell's dominion and persistence. She was certain now that what she could only call his importunity had proved somehow disastrous to Rodney Lanyon. And with it all, unacknowledged, beaten back, her desire to see Rodney ran to and fro in the burrows underground.

He did not write, but on the Friday of that week, the sixth week, he came.

She saw him coming up the garden path and she shrank back into her room; but the light searched her and found her, and he saw her there. He never knocked; he came straight and swiftly to her through the open doors. He shut the door of the room behind him and held her by her arms with both his hands.

"Rodney," she said, "did you mean to come, or did I make you?"

"I meant to come. You couldn't make me."

"Couldn't I? Oh *say* I couldn't."

"You could," he said, "but you didn't. And what does it matter so long as I'm here?"

"Let me look at you."

She held him at arm's length and turned him to the light. It showed his face white, worn as it used to be, all the little lines of worry back again, and two new ones that drew down the corners of his mouth.

"You've been ill," she said. "You *are* ill."

"No. I'm all right. What's the matter with *you?*"

"With me? Nothing. Do I look as if anything was wrong?"

"You look as if you'd been frightened."

He paused, considering it.

"This place isn't good for you. You oughtn't to be here like this, all by yourself."

"Oh! Rodney, it's the dearest place. I love every inch of it. Besides I'm not altogether by myself."

He did not seem to hear her; and what he said next arose evidently out of his own thoughts.

"I say, are those Powells still here?"

"They've been here all the time."

"Do you see much of them?"

"I see them every day. Sometimes nearly all day."

"That accounts for it."

Again he paused.

"It's my fault, Agatha. I shouldn't have left you to them. I knew."

"What did you know?"

"Well—the state he was in, and the effect it would have on you—that it would have on anyone."

"It's all right. He's going. Besides, he isn't in a state any more. He's cured."

"Cured? What's cured him?"

She evaded him.

"He's been well ever since he came; absolutely well after the first day."

"Still, you've been frightened; you've been worrying; you've had some shock or other, or some strain. What is it?"

"Nothing. Only—just the last week—I've been a little frightened about you—when you wouldn't write to me. Why didn't you?"

"Because I couldn't."

"Then you *were* ill?"

"I'm all right. I know what's the matter with me."

"It's Bella?"

He laughed harshly.

"No, it isn't this time. I haven't that excuse."

"Excuse for what?"

"For coming. Bella's all right. Bella's a perfect angel. God knows what's happened to her. I don't. *I* haven't had anything to do with it."

"You had. You had everything. You were an angel, too."

"I haven't been much of an angel lately, I can tell you."

"She'll understand. She does understand."

They had sat down on the couch in the corner so that they faced each other. Agatha faced him, but fear was in her eyes.

"It doesn't matter," he said, "whether she understands or not. I don't want to talk about her."

Agatha said nothing, but there was a movement in her face, a white wave of trouble, and the fear fluttered in her eyes. He saw it there.

"You needn't bother about Bella. She's all right. You see, it's not as if she cared."

"Cared?"

"About *me* much."

"But she does, she does care!"

"I suppose she did once, or she couldn't have married me. But she doesn't now. You see—you may as well know it, Agatha—there's another man."

"Oh, Rodney, no."

"Yes. It's been perfectly all right, you know; but there he is and there he's been for years. She told me. I'm awfully sorry for her."

He paused.

"What beats me is her being so angelic now, when she doesn't care."

"Rodney, she does. It's all over, like an illness. It's you she cares for *now*."

"Think so?"

"I'm sure of it."

"I'm not."

"You will be. You'll see it. You'll see it soon."

He glanced at her under his bent brows.

"I don't know," he said, "that I want to see it. *That* isn't what's the matter with me. You don't understand the situation. It isn't all over. She's only being good about it. She doesn't care a rap about me. She *can't*. And what's more I don't want her to."

"You—don't—want her to?"

He burst out. "My God, I want nothing in this world but *you*. And I can't have you. That's what's the matter with me."

"No, no, it isn't," she cried. "You don't know."

"I do know. It's hurting me. And——" he looked at her and his voice shook—"its hurting you. I won't have you hurt."

He started forward suddenly as if he would have taken her in his arms. She put up her hands to keep him off.

"No, no!" she cried. "I'm all right. I'm all right. It isn't that. You mustn't think it."

"I know it. That's why I came."

He came near again. He seized her struggling hands.

"Agatha, why can't we? Why shouldn't we?"

"No, no," she moaned. "We can't. We mustn't. Not *that* way. don't want it, Rodney, that way."

"It shall be any way you like. Only don't beat me off."
"I'm not—beating—you—off."
She stood up. Her face changed suddenly.
"Rodney—I forgot. They're coming."
"Who are they?"
"The Powells. They're coming to lunch."
"Can't you put them off?"
"I can, but it wouldn't be very wise, dear. They might think——"
"Confound them— they *would* think."
He was pulling himself visibly together.
"I'm afraid, Aggy, I ought——"
"I know—you must. You must go soon."
He looked at his watch.
"I must go *now*, dear. I daren't stay. It's dangerous."
"I know," she whispered.
"But when is the brute going?"
"Poor darling, he's going next week—next Thursday."
"Well then, I'll—I'll——"
"Please, you must go."
"I'm going."
She held out her hand.

"I daren't touch you," he whispered. "I'm going now. But I'll come again next Friday, and I'll stay."

As she saw his drawn face there was not any strength in her to say "No."

VIII

He had gone. She gathered herself together and went across the field to meet the Powells as if nothing had happened.

Milly and her husband were standing at the gate of the Farm. They were watching; yes, they were watching Rodney Lanyon as he crossed the river by the Farm bridge which led up the hill by the field path that slanted to the farther and western end of the wood. Their attitude showed that they were interested in his brief appearance on the scene, and that they wondered what he had been doing there. And as she approached them she was aware of something cold, ominous and inimical, that came from them, and set towards her and passed by. Her sense of it only lasted for a second, and was gone so completely that she could hardly realise that she had ever felt it.

For they were charming to her. Harding, indeed, was more perfect in his beautiful quality than ever. There was something about him moreover that she had not been prepared for, something strange and pathetic, humble almost and appealing. She saw it in his eyes, his large, dark, wild animal eyes, chiefly. But it was a look that claimed as much as it deprecated; that assumed between them some unspoken communion and understanding. With all its pathos it was a look that frightened her. Neither he nor his wife said a word about Rodney Lanyon. She was not even sure, now, that they had recognised him.

They stayed with her all that afternoon; for their time, they said, was getting short; and when, about six o'clock, Milly got up to go she took Agatha aside and said that, if Agatha didn't mind, she would leave Harding with her for a little while. She knew he wanted to talk to her.

Agatha proposed that they should walk up the hill through the wood. They went in a curious silence and constraint; and it was not until they had got into the wood and were shut up in it together that he spoke.

"I think my wife told you that I had something to say to you?"

"Yes, Harding," she said; "what is it?"

"Well, it's this—first of all I want to thank you. I know what you're doing for me."

"I'm sorry. I didn't want you to know. I thought Milly wasn't going to tell you."

"She didn't tell me."

Agatha said nothing. She was bound to accept his statement. Of course, he must have known that Milly had broken her word, and he was trying to shield her.

"I mean," he went on, "that whether she told me or not, it's no matter. I knew."

"You—knew?"

"I knew that something was happening, and I knew that it wasn't the place. Places never make any difference. I only go to 'em because Milly thinks they do. Besides, if it came to that, this place—from my peculiar point of view, mind you—was simply beastly. I couldn't have stood another night of it."

"Well."

"Well, the thing went; and I got all right. And the queer part of it is that I felt as if you were in it somehow, as if you'd done something. I half hoped you might say something, but you never did."

"One ought not to speak about these things, Harding. And I told you I didn't want you to know."

"I didn't know what you did. I don't know now, though Milly tried to tell me. But I felt you. I felt you all the time."

"It was not I you felt. I implore you not to think it was."

"What can I think?"

"Think as I do; think—think——" She stopped herself. She was aware of the futility of her charge to this man who denied, who always had denied, the supernatural.

"It isn't a question of thinking," she said at last.

"Of believing, then? Are you going to tell me to believe?"

"No; it isn't believing either. It's knowing. Either you know it or you don't know, though you may come to know. But whatever you think, you mustn't think it's me."

"I rather like to. Why shouldn't I?"

She turned on him her grave white face, and he noticed a curious expression there as of incipient terror.

"Because you might do some great harm either to yourself or——"

His delicate, sceptical eyebrows questioned her.

"Or me."

"You?" he murmured gently, pitifully almost.

"Yes, me. Or even—well, one doesn't quite know where the harm might end. If I could only make you take another view. I tried to make you—to work it that way—so that you might find the secret and do it for yourself."

"I can't do anything for myself. But, Agatha, I'll take any view you like of it, so long as you'll keep on at me."

"Of course I'll keep on."

At that he stopped suddenly in his path, and faced her.

"I say, you know, it isn't hurting you, is it?"

She felt herself wince. "Hurting me? How could it hurt me?"

"Milly said it couldn't."

Agatha sighed. She said to herself, "Milly—if only Milly hadn't interfered."

"Don't you think it's cold here in the wood?" she said.

"Cold?"

"Yes. Let's go back."

As they went Milly met them at the Farm bridge. She wanted Agatha to come and stay for supper; she pressed, she pleaded, and Agatha, who had never yet withstood Milly's pleading, stayed.

It was from that evening that she really dated it, the thing that came upon her. She was aware that in staying she disobeyed an instinct that told her to go home. Otherwise she could not say that she had any sort of premonition. Supper was laid in the long room with the yellow blinds, where she had first found Harding Powell. The blinds were down to-night, and the lamp on the table burnt low; the oil had given out. The light in the room was still daylight and came level from the sunset, leaking through the yellow blinds. It struck Agatha that it was the same light, the same ochreish light that they had found in the room six weeks ago. But that was nothing.

What it was she did not know. The horrible light went when the flame of the lamp burnt clearer. Harding was talking to her cheerfully and Milly was smiling at them both, when half through the meal Agatha got up and declared that she must go. She was ill; she was tired; they must forgive her, but she must go.

The Powells rose and stood by her, close to her, in their distress. Milly brought wine and put it to her lips; but she turned her head away and whispered, "Please let me go. Let me get away."

Harding wanted to walk back with her, but she refused with a vehemence that deterred him.

"How very odd of her," said Milly, as they stood at the gate and watched her go. She was walking fast, almost running, with a furtive step, as if something pursued her.

Powell did not speak. He turned from his wife and went slowly back into the house.

IX.

She knew now what had happened to her. She *was* afraid of Harding Powell; and it was her fear that had cried to her to go, to get away from him.

The awful thing was that she knew she could not get away from him. She had only to close her eyes and she would find the visible image of him hanging before her on the wall of darkness. And to-night, when she tried to cover it with Rodney's it was no longer obliterated. Rodney's image had worn thin and Harding's showed through. She was more afraid of it than she had been of Harding; and, more than anything, she was afraid of being afraid. Harding was the object of a boundless and indestructible compassion, and her fear of him was hateful to her and unholy. She knew that it would be terrible to let it follow her into that darkness where she would presently go down with him alone. "It would be all right," she said to herself, "if only I didn't keep on seeing him."

But he, his visible image, and her fear of it, persisted even while the interior darkness, the divine, beneficent darkness rose round her, wave on wave, and flooded her; even while she held him there and healed him; even while it still seemed to her that her love pierced through her fear and gathered to her, spirit to spirit, flame to pure flame, the nameless, innermost essence of Rodney and of Bella. She had known in the beginning that it was by love that she held them; but now, though she loved Rodney and had almost lost her pity for Harding in her fear of him, it was Harding rather than Rodney that she held.

In the morning she woke with a sense, which was almost a memory, of Harding having been in the room with her all night. She was tired, as if she had had some long and unrestrained communion with him.

She put away at once the fatigue that pressed on her (the gift still "worked" in a flash for the effacing of bodily sensation). She told herself that, after all, her fear had done no harm. Seldom in her experience of the Power had she had so tremendous a sense of having got through to it, of having "worked" it, of having held Harding under it and healed him. For, when all was said and done, whether she had been afraid of him or not, she had held him, she had never once let go. The proof was that he still went sane, visibly, indubitably cured.

All the same she felt that she could not go through another day like yesterday. She could not see him. She wrote a letter to Milly. Since it concerned Milly so profoundly it was well that Milly should be made to understand. She hoped that Milly would forgive her if they didn't see her for the next day or two. If she was to go on (she underlined it) she must be left absolutely alone. It seemed unkind when they were going so soon, but—Milly knew—it was impossible to exaggerate the importance of what she had to do.

Milly wrote back that of course she understood. It should be as Agatha wished. Only (so Milly "sustained" her) Agatha must not allow herself to doubt the Power. How could she when she saw what it had done for Harding. If *she* doubted, what could she expect of Harding? But of course she must take care of her own dear self. If she failed—if she gave way—what on earth would the poor darling do, now that he had become dependent on her?

She wrote as if it was Agatha's fault that he had become dependent; as if Agatha had nothing, had nobody in the world to think of but Harding; as if nobody, as if nothing in the world beside Harding mattered. And Agatha found herself resenting Milly's view. As if to her anything in the world mattered beside Rodney Lanyon.

For three days she did not see the Powells.

X

The three nights passed as before, but with an increasing struggle and fear.

She knew, she knew what was happening. It was as if the walls of personality were wearing thin, and through them she felt him trying to get at her.

She put the thought from her. It was absurd. It was insane. Such things could not be. It was not in any region of such happenings that she held him, but in the place of peace, the charmed circle, the flawless crystal sphere.

Still the thought persisted; and still, in spite of it, she held him, she would not let him go. By her honour, and by her love for Milly she was

bound to hold him, even though she knew how terribly, how implacably he prevailed.

She was aware now that the persistence of his image on the blackness was only a sign to her of his being there in his substance; in his supreme innermost essence. It had obviously no relation to his bodily appearance, since she had not seen him for three days. It tended more and more to vanish, to give place to the shapeless, nameless, all-pervading presence. And her fear of him became pervading, nameless and shapeless too.

Somehow it was always behind her now; it followed her from room to room of her house; it drove her out of doors. It seemed to her that she went before it with quick uncertain feet and a fluttering heart, aimless and tormented as a leaf driven by a vague light wind. Sometimes it sent her up the field towards the wood; sometimes it would compel her to go a little way towards the Farm; and then it was as if it took her by the shoulders and turned her back again towards her house.

On the fourth day (which was Tuesday of the Powells' last week), she determined to fight this fear. She could not defy it to the extent of going on to the Farm where she might see Harding, but certainly she would not suffer it to turn her from her hill-top. It was there that she had always gone as the night fell, calling home her thoughts to sleep: and it was there, seven weeks ago, that the moon, the golden-white and holy moon, had led her to the consecration of her gift. She had returned softly, seven weeks ago, carrying carefully her gift, as a fragile, flawless crystal. Since then how recklessly she had held it! To what jars and risks she had exposed the exquisite and sacred thing!

She waited for her hour between sunset and twilight. It was perfect, following a perfect day. Above the wood the sky had a violet lucidity, purer than the day; below it the pale brown earth wore a violet haze, and over that a web of green, woven of the sparse, thin blades of the young wheat. There were two ways up the hill; one over her own bridge across the river, that led her to the steep straight path through the wood; one over the Farm bridge by the slanting path up the field. She chose the wood.

She paused on the bridge, and looked down the valley. She saw the farm-house standing in the stillness that was its own secret and the hour's. A strange, pale lamplight, lit too soon, showed in the windows of the room she knew. The Powells would be sitting there at their supper.

She went on and came to the gate of the wood. It swung open on its hinges, a sign to her that some time or other Harding Powell had passed there. She paused and looked about her. Presently she saw Harding Powell coming down the wood-path.

He stopped. He had not yet seen her. He was looking up to the arch of the beech-trees, where the green light still came through. She could see by his attitude of quiet contemplation the sane and happy creature that he was. He was sane, she knew. And yet, no; she could not really see him as sane. It was her sanity, not his own that he walked in. Or else what she saw was the empty shell of him. *He* was in her. Hitherto it had been in the darkness that she had felt him most, and her fear of him had been chiefly fear of the invisible Harding, and of what he might do there in the darkness. Now her fear, which had become almost hatred, was transferred to his person. In the flesh, as in the spirit, he was pursuing her.

He had seen her now. He was making straight for her. And she turned and ran round the eastern bend of the hill (a yard or so to the left of her) and hid from him. From where she crouched at the edge of the wood she saw him descend the lower slope to the river; by standing up and advancing a little she could see him follow the river path on the nearer side and cross by the Farm bridge.

She was sure of all that. She was sure that it did not take her more than twelve or fifteen minutes (for she had gone that way a hundred times) to get back to the gate, to walk up the little wood, to cut through it by a track in the undergrowth, and turn round the further and western end of it. Thence she could either take the long path that slanted across the field to the Farm bridge or keep to the upper ground along a trail in the grass skirting the wood, and so reach home by the short straight path and her own bridge.

She decided on the short straight path as leading her farther from the farm-house, where there could be no doubt that Harding Powell was now. At the point she had reached, the jutting corner of the wood hid from her the downward slope of the hill, and the flat land at its foot.

As she turned the corner of the wood, she was brought suddenly in sight of the valley. A hot wave swept over her brain, so strong that she staggered as it passed. It was followed by a strange sensation of physical sickness, that passed also. It was then as if what went through her had charged her nerves of sight to a pitch of insane and horrible sensibility. The green of the grass, and of the young corn, the very colour of life, was violent and frightful. Not only was it abominable in itself, it was a thing to be shuddered at, because of some still more abominable significance it had.

Agatha had known once, standing where she stood now, an exaltation of sense that was ecstasy; when every leaf and every blade of grass shone with a divine translucence; when every nerve in her thrilled, and her whole being rang with the joy which is immanent in the life of things.

What she experienced now (if she could have given any account of it) was exaltation at the other end of the scale. It was horror and fear unspeakable. Horror and fear immanent in the life of things. She saw the world in a loathsome transparency; she saw it with the eye of a soul in which no sense of the divine had ever been, of a soul that denied the supernatural. It had been Harding Powell's soul, and it had become hers.

Furiously, implacably, he was getting at her.

Out of the wood and the hedges that bordered it there came sounds that were horrible, because she knew them to be inaudible to any ear less charged with insanity; small sounds of movement, of strange shiverings, swarmings, crepitations; sounds of incessant, infinitely subtle urging, of agony and recoil. Sounds they were of the invisible things unborn, driven towards birth; sounds of the worm unborn, of things that creep and writhe towards dissolution. She knew what she heard and saw. She heard the stirring of the corruption that Life was; the young blades of corn were frightful to her, for in them was the push, the passion of the evil which was Life; the trees as they stretched out their arms and threatened her were frightful with the terror which was Life. Down there, in that gross green hot-bed, the earth teemed with the abomination; and the river, livid, white, a monstrous thing, crawled, dragging with it the very slime.

All this she perceived in a flash, when she had turned the corner. It sank into stillness and grew dim; she was aware of it only as the scene,

the region in which one thing, her terror, moved and hunted her. Among sounds of the rustling of leaves, and the soft crush of grass, and the whirring of little wings in fright, she heard it go; it went on the other side of the hedge, a little way behind her as she skirted the wood. She stood still to let it pass her, and she felt that it passed, and that it stopped and waited. A terrified bird flew out of the hedge, no further than a fledgling's flight in front of her. And in that place it flew from she saw Harding Powell.

He was crouching under the hedge as she had crouched when she had hidden from him. His face was horrible, but not more horrible than the Terror that had gone behind her; and she heard herself crying out to him, "Harding! Harding!" appealing to him against the implacable, unseen Pursuer.

He had risen (she saw him rise), but as she called his name he became insubstantial, and she saw a Thing, a nameless, unnameable, shapeless Thing, proceeding from him. A brown, blurred Thing, transparent as dusk is, that drifted on the air. It was torn and tormented, a fragment parted and flung off from some immense and as yet invisible cloud of horror. It drifted from her; it dissolved like smoke on the hillside; and the Thing that had born and begotten it pursued her.

She bowed under it, and turned from the edge of the wood, the horrible place it had been born in; she ran before it headlong down the field, trampling the young corn under her feet. As she ran she heard a voice in the valley, a voice of amazement and entreaty, calling to her in a sort of song.

"What—are—you—running for—Aggy—Aggy?"

It was Milly's voice that called.

Then as she came, still headlong, to the river, she heard Harding's voice saying something, she did not know what. She couldn't stop to listen to him, or to consider how he came to be there in the valley, when a minute ago she had seen him by the edge of the wood, up on the very top of the hill.

He was on the bridge—the Farm bridge—now. He held out his hand to steady her as she came on over the swinging plank.

She knew that he had led her to the other side, and that he was standing there, still saying something, and that she answered.

"Have you *no* pity on me? Can't you let me go?"

And then she broke from him and ran.

XI

She was awake all that night. Harding Powell and the horror begotten of him had no pity; he would not let her go. Her gift, her secret, was powerless now against the pursuer.

She had a light burning in her room till morning, for she was afraid of sleep. Those unlit roads down which, if she slept, the Thing would surely hunt her, were ten times more terrible than the white-washed, familiar room where it merely watched and waited.

In the morning she found a letter on her breakfast-table, which the maid said Mrs. Powell had left late last evening, after Agatha had gone to bed. Milly wrote: "Dearest Agatha,—Of course I understand. But are we *never* going to see you again? What was the matter with you last night? You terrified poor Harding.—Yours ever, M. P."

Without knowing why, Agatha tore the letter into bits and burned them in the flame of a candle. She watched them burn.

"Of course," she said to herself, "that isn't sane of me."

And when she had gone round her house and shut all the doors and locked them, and drawn down the blinds in every closed window, and found herself cowering over her fireless hearth, shuddering with fear, she knew that, whether she were mad or not, there was madness in her. She knew that her face in the glass (she had the courage to look at it) was the face of an insane terror let loose.

That she did know it, that there were moments—flashes—in which she could contemplate her state and recognise it for what it was, showed that there was still a trace of sanity in her. It was not her own madness that possessed her. It was, or rather it had been, Harding Powell's; she had taken it from him. That was what it meant—to take away madness.

There could be no doubt as to what had happened, nor as to the way of its happening. The danger of it, utterly unforeseen, was part of the very operation of the gift. In the process of getting at Harding to heal him she had had to destroy not only the barriers of flesh and blood, but those innermost walls of personality that divide and protect, mercifully, one spirit from another. With the first thinning of the walls Harding's insanity had leaked through to her, with the first breach it had broken in. It had been transferred to her complete with all its details, with its very gestures, in all the phases that it ran through; Harding's premonitory fears and tremblings; Harding's exalted sensibility; Harding's abominable vision of the world, that vision from which the resplendent divinity had perished; Harding's flight before the pursuing Terror. She was sitting now as Harding had sat when she found him crouching over the hearth in that horrible room with the drawn blinds. It seemed to her that to have a madness of your own would not be so very horrible. It would be, after all, your own. It could not possibly be one-half so horrible as this, to have somebody else's madness put into you.

The one thing by which she knew herself was the desire that no longer ran underground, but emerged and appeared before her, lit by her lucid flashes, naked and unashamed.

She still knew her own. And there was something in her still that was greater than the thing that inhabited her, the pursuer, the pursued, who had rushed into her as his refuge, his sanctuary; and that was her fear of him and of what he might do there. If her doors stood open to him, they stood open to Bella and to Rodney Lanyon too. What else had she been trying for, if it were not to break down in all three of them the barriers of flesh and blood and to transmit the Power? In the unthinkable sacrament to which she called them they had all three partaken. And since the holy thing could suffer her to be thus permeated, saturated with Harding Powell, was it to be supposed that she could keep him to herself, that she would not pass him on to Rodney Lanyon.

It was not, after all, incredible. If he could get at her, of course he could get, through her, at Rodney.

That was the Terror of terrors, and it was her own. That it could subsist together with that alien horror, that it remained supreme beside it, proved that there was still some tract in her where the invader had not yet penetrated. In her love for Rodney and her fear for him she entrenched herself against the destroyer. There at least she knew herself impregnable.

It was in such a luminous flash that she saw the thing still in her own hands, and resolved that it should cease.

She would have to break her word to Milly. She would have to let Harding go, to loosen deliberately his hold on her and cut him off. It could be done. She had held him through her gift, and it would be still possible, through the gift, to let him go. Of course she knew it would be hard.

It *was* hard. It was terrible; for he clung. She had not counted on his clinging. It was as if, in their undivided substance, he had had knowledge of her purpose and had prepared himself to fight it. He hung on desperately; he refused to yield an inch of the ground he had taken from her. He was no longer a passive thing in that world where she had brought him. And he had certain advantages. He had possessed her for three nights and for three days. She had made herself porous to him; and her sleep had always been his opportunity.

It took her three nights and three days to cast him out. In the first night she struggled with him. She lay with all her senses hushed, and brought the divine darkness round her, but in the darkness she was aware that she struggled. She could build up the walls between them, but she knew that as fast as she built them he tore at them and pulled them down.

She bore herself humbly towards the Power that permitted him. She conceived of it as holiness estranged and offended; she pleaded with it. She could no longer trust her knowledge of its working, but she tried to come to terms with it. She offered herself as a propitiation, as a substitute for Rodney Lanyon, if there was no other way by which he might be saved.

Apparently that was not the way it worked. Harding seemed to gain. But, as he kept her awake all night, he had no chance to establish himself, as he would otherwise have done, in her sleep. The odds between her and her adversary were even.

She second night *she* gained. She felt that she had built up her walls again; that she had cut Harding off. With spiritual pain, with the tearing of the bonds of compassion, with a supreme agony of rupture, he parted from her.

Possibly the Power was neutral; for in the dawn after the second night she slept. That sleep left her uncertain of the event. There was no telling into what unguarded depths it might have carried her. She knew that she had been free of her adversary before she slept, but the chances were that he had got at her in her sleep. Since the Power held the balance even between her and the invader, it would no doubt permit him to enter by any loophole that he could seize.

On the third night, as it were in the last watch, she surrendered, but not to Harding Powell.

She could not say how it came to her; she was lying in her bed with her eyes shut and her arms held apart from her body, diminishing all contacts, stripping for her long slide into the cleansing darkness, when she found herself recalling some forgotten, yet inalienable knowledge that she had. Something said to her: "Do you not remember? There is no striving and no crying in the world which you would enter. There is no more appeasing where peace *is*. You cannot make your own terms with the high and holy Power. It is not enough to give yourself for Rodney Lanyon, for he is more to you than you are yourself. Besides, any substitution of self for self would be useless, for there is no more self there. That is why the Power cannot work that way. But if it should require you here, on this side the threshold, to give him up, to give up your desire of him, what then? Would you loose your hold on him and let him go?"

"Would you?" the voice insisted.

She heard herself answer from the pure threshold of the darkness, "I would."

Sleep came on her there; a divine sleep from beyond the threshold; sacred, inviolate sleep.

It was the seal upon the bond.

XII.

She woke on Friday morning to a vivid and indestructible certainty of escape.

But there had been a condition attached to her deliverance; and it was borne in on her that instead of waiting for the Power to force its terms on her, she would do well to be beforehand with it. Friday was Rodney's day, and this time she knew that he would come. His coming, of course, was nothing, but he had told her plainly that he would not go. She must therefore wire to him not to come.

In order to do this she had to get up early and walk about a mile to the nearest village. She took the shortest way which was by the Farm bridge and up the slanting path to the far end of the wood. She knew vaguely that once, as she had turned the corner of the wood, there had been horrors, and that the divine beauty of green pastures and still waters had appeared to her as a valley of the shadow of evil, but she had no more memory of what she had seen than of a foul dream, three nights dead. She went at first uplifted in the joy of her deliverance, drawing into her the light and fragrance of the young morning. Then she remembered Harding Powell. She had noticed as she passed the Farm house that the blinds were drawn again in all the windows. That was because Harding and Milly were gone. She thought of Harding, of Milly, with an immense tenderness and compassion, but also with lucidity, with sanity. They had gone—yesterday—and she had not seen them. That could not be helped. She had done all that was possible. She could not have seen them as long as the least taint of Harding's malady remained with her. And how could she have faced Milly after having broken her word to her?

Not that she regretted even that, the breaking of her word, so sane was she. She could conceive that, if it had not been for Rodney Lanyon, she might have had the courage to have gone on. She might have considered that she was bound to save Harding, even at the price of her own sanity, since there *was* her word to Milly. But it might be questioned whether by holding on to him she would have kept it, whether she really could have saved him that way. She was no more than a vehicle, a crystal vessel for the inscrutable and secret power, and in destroying her utterly Harding would have destroyed himself. You could not transmit the Power through a broken crystal—why, not even through one that had a flaw.

There had been a flaw somewhere; so much was certain. And as she searched now for the flaw, with her luminous sanity, she found it in her fear. She knew, she had always known, the danger of taking fear and the thought of fear with her into that world where to think was to will, and to will was to create. But for the rest, she had tried to make herself clear as crystal. And what could she do more than give up Rodney?

As she set her face towards the village, she was sustained by a sacred ardour, a sacrificial exaltation. But as she turned homewards across the solitary fields, she realised the sadness, the desolation of the thing she had

accomplished. He would not come. Her message would reach him two hours before the starting of the train he always came by.

Across the village she saw her white house shining, and the windows of his room (her study, which was always his room when he came); its lattices were flung open as if it welcomed him.

Something had happened there.

Her maid was standing by the garden gate looking for her. As she approached, the girl came over the field to meet her. She had an air of warning her, of preparing her for something.

It was Mrs. Powell, the maid said. She had come again; she was in there, waiting for Miss Agatha. She wouldn't go away; she had gone straight in. She was in an awful state. The maid thought it was something to do with Mr. Powell.

They had not gone, then.

"If I were you, Miss," the maid was saying, "I wouldn't see her."

"Of course I shall see her."

She went at once into the room where Rodney might have been, where Milly was. Milly rose from the corner where she sat averted.

"Agatha," she said, "I had to come."

Agatha kissed the white, suppliant face that Milly lifted.

"I thought," she said, "you'd gone—yesterday."

"We couldn't go. He—he's ill again."

"Ill?"

"Yes. Didn't you see the blinds down as you passed?"

"I thought it was because you'd gone."

"It's because that *thing's* come back again."

"When did it come, Milly?"

"It's been coming for three days."

Agatha drew in her breath with a pang. It was just three days since she began to let him go.

Milly went on. "And now he won't come out of the house. He says he's being hunted. He's afraid of being seen, being found. He's in there—in that room. He made me lock him in."

They stared at each other and at the horror that their faces took and gave back each to each.

"Oh, Aggy——" Milly cried it out in her anguish. "You *will* help him?"

"I can't." Agatha heard her voice go dry in her throat.

"You *can't*?"

Agatha shook her head.

"You mean you haven't, then?"

"I haven't. I couldn't."

"But you told me—you told me you were giving yourself up to it. You said that was why you couldn't see us."

"It *was* why. Do sit down, Milly."

They sat down, still staring at each other. Agatha faced the window, so that the light ravaged her.

Milly went on. "That was why I left you alone. I thought you were going on. You said you wouldn't let him go; you promised me you'd keep on....."

"I did keep on, till....."

But Milly had only paused to hold down a sob. Her voice broke out again, clear, harsh, accusing.

"What were you doing all that time?"

"Of course," said Agatha, "you're bound to think I let you down."

"What am I to think?"

"Milly—I asked you not to think it was me."

"Of course I knew it was the Power, not you. But you had hold of it. You did something. Something that other people can't do. You did it for one night, and that night he was well. You kept on for six weeks and he was well all that time. You leave off for three days—I know when you left off—and he's ill again. And then you tell me that it isn't you. It *is* you; and if it's you you can't give him up. You can't stand by, Aggy, and refuse to help him. You know what it was. How can you bear to let him suffer? How can you?"

"I can because I must."

"And why must you?"

Milly raised her head more in defiance than in supplication.

"Because—I told you that I might give out. Well—I have given out."

"You told me that the Power can't give out—that you've only got to hold on to it—that it's no effort. I'm only asking you, Aggy, to hold on."

"You don't know what you're asking."

"I'm asking you only to do what you have done, to give five minutes in the day to him. You said it was enough. Only five minutes. It isn't much to ask."

Agatha sighed.

"What difference could it make to you—five minutes?"

"You don't understand," said Agatha.

"I do. I don't ask you to see him, or to bother with him; only to go on as you were doing."

"You don't understand. It isn't possible to explain it. I can't go on."

"I see. You're tired, Aggy. Well—not now, not to-day. But later, when you're rested, won't you?"

"Oh, Milly, dear Milly, if I could....."

"You can. You will. I know you will....."

"No. You must understand it. Never again. Never again."

"Never?"

"Never."

There was a long silence. At last Milly's voice crept through, trained and thin, feebly argumentative, the voice of a thing defeated and yet unconvinced.

"I don't understand you, Agatha. You say it isn't you; you say you're only a connecting link; that you do nothing; that the Power that does it is inexhaustible; that there's nothing it can't do, nothing that it won't do for us, and yet you go and cut yourself off from it—deliberately—from the thing you believe to be divine."

"I haven't cut myself off from it."

"You've cut Harding off," said Milly. "If you refuse to hold him."

"That wouldn't cut him off—from It. But Milly, holding him was bad; it wasn't safe."

"It saved him."

"All the same, Milly, it wasn't safe. The thing itself isn't."

"The Power? The divine thing?"

"Yes. It's divine and it's—it's terrible. It does terrible things to us."

"How could it? If it's divine, wouldn't it be compassionate? Do you suppose it's less compassionate than—*you* are? Why, Agatha, when it's goodness and purity itself——?"

"Goodness and purity are terrible. We don't understand it. It's got its own laws. What you call prayer's all right—it would be safe, I mean—I suppose it might get answered anyway, however we fell short. But this—this is different. It's the highest, Milly; and if you rush in and make for the highest, can't you see, oh, can't you see how it might break you? Can't you see what it requires of *you?* Absolute purity. I told you, Milly. You have to be crystal to it—crystal without a flaw."

"And—if there were a flaw?"

"The whole thing, don't you see, would break down; it would be no good. In fact, it would be awfully dangerous."

"To whom?"

"To you—to them, the people you're helping. You make a connection; you smash down all the walls so that you—you get through to each other, and supposing there was something wrong with *you*, and It doesn't work any longer (the Power, I mean), don't you see that you might do harm where you were trying to help?"

"But—Agatha—there was nothing wrong with you."

"How do I know? Can anybody be sure there's nothing wrong with them?"

"You think," said Milly, "there was a flaw somewhere?"

"There must have been—somewhere....."

"What was it? Can't you find out? Can't you think? Think."

"Sometimes—I have thought it may have been my fear."

"Fear?"

"Yes, it's the worst thing. Don't you remember, I told you not to be afraid?"

"But Agatha, you were *not* afraid."

"I was—afterwards. I got frightened."

"*You?* And you told *me* not to be afraid," said Milly.

"I had to tell you."

"And I wasn't afraid—afterwards. I believed in you. He believed in you."

"You shouldn't have. You shouldn't. That was just it."

"That was it? I suppose you'll say next it was I who frightened you?"

As they faced each other there, Agatha, with the terrible, the almost supernatural lucidity she had, saw what was making Milly say that. Milly had been frightened; she felt that she had probably communicated her fright; she knew that that was dangerous, and she knew that if it had done harm to Harding, she and not Agatha would be responsible. And because she couldn't face her responsibility, she was trying to fasten upon Agatha some other fault than fear.

"No, Milly, I don't say you frightened me, it was my own fear."

"What was there for *you* to be afraid of?"

Agatha was silent. That was what she must never tell her, not even to make her understand. She did not know what Milly was trying to think of her; Milly might think what she liked; but she should never know what her terror had been and her danger.

Agatha's silence helped Milly.

"Nothing will make me believe," she said, "that it was your fear that did it. That would never have made you give Harding up. Besides, you were not afraid at first, though you may have been afterwards."

"Afterwards?"

It was her own word, but it had as yet no significance for her.

"After—whatever it was you gave him up for. You gave him up for something."

"I did not. I never gave him up until I was afraid."

"You gave It up. You wouldn't have done that if there had not been something. Something that stood between."

"If," said Agatha, "you could only tell me what it was."

"I can't tell you. I don't know what came to you. I only know that if I'd had a gift like that, I would not have given it up for anything. I wouldn't have let anything come between. I'd have kept myself...."

"I did keep myself—for *it*. I couldn't keep myself entirely for Harding; there were other things, other people. I couldn't give them up for Harding or for anybody."

"Are you quite sure you kept yourself what you were, Aggy?"

"What *was* I?"

"My dear—you were absolutely pure. You said *that* was the condition."

"Yes. And, don't you see, who *is*—absolutely? If you thought *I* was you didn't know me."

As she spoke she heard the sharp click of the latch as the garden gate fell to; she had her back to the window so that she saw nothing, but she heard footsteps that she knew, resolute and energetic footsteps that hurried to their end. She felt the red blood surge into her face, and saw that Milly's face was white with another passion, and that Milly's eyes were fixed on the figure of the man who came up the garden path. And without looking at her Milly answered.

"I don't know now; but I think I see, my dear...." In Milly's pause the door-bell rang violently. Milly rose and let her have it—"what was the flaw in the crystal."

XIII

Rodney entered the room and it was then that Milly looked at her. Milly's face was no longer the face of passion, but of sadness and reproach, almost of recovered incredulity. It questioned rather than accused her. It said unmistakably, "You gave him up for *that*?"

Agatha's voice recalled her. "Milly, I think you know Mr. Lanyon."

Rodney, in acknowledging Milly's presence, did not look at her. He saw nothing there but Agatha's face which showed him at last the expression that to his eyes had always been latent in it, the look of the tragic, hidden soul of terror that he had divined in her. He saw her at last as he had known he should some day see her. Terror was no longer there, but it had possessed her; it had passed through her and destroyed that other look she had from her lifted mouth and hair, the look of a thing borne on wings. Now, with her wings beaten, with her white face and haggard eyes, he saw her as a flying thing tracked down and trampled under the feet of the pursuer. He saw it in one flash as he stood there holding Milly's hand.

Milly's face had no significance for him. He didn't see it. When at last he looked at her his eyes questioned her, they demanded an account from her of what he saw.

For Agatha Milly's face, prepared as it was for leave-taking, remained charged with meaning; it refused to divest itself of reproach and of the incredulity that challenged her. Agatha rose to it.

"You're not going, Milly, just because he's come? You needn't."

Milly *was* going.

He rose to it also.

If Mrs. Powell *would* go like that—in that distressing way—she must at least let him walk back with her. Agatha wouldn't mind. He hadn't seen Mrs. Powell for ages.

He had risen to such a height that Milly was bewildered by him. She let him walk back with her to the Farm and a little way beyond it. Agatha said good-bye to Milly at the garden gate and watched them go. Then she went up into her own room.

He was gone so long that she thought he was never coming back again. She did not want him to come back just yet, but she knew that she was not afraid to see him. It did not occur to her to wonder why in spite of her message he had come, nor why he had come by an earlier train than usual; she supposed that he must have started before her message could have reached him. All that, his coming or his not coming, mattered so little now.

For now the whole marvellous thing was clear to her. She knew the secret of the gift. She saw luminously, almost transparently, the way it worked. Milly had shown her. Milly knew; Milly had seen; she had put her finger on the flaw.

It was not fear, Milly had been right there too. Until the moment when Harding Powell had begun to get at her Agatha had never known what fear felt like. It was the strain of mortality in her love for Rodney; the hidden thing, unforeseen and unacknowledged, working its work in the darkness. It had been there all the time, undermining her secret, sacred places. It had made the first breach through which the fear that was not *her* fear had entered. She could tell the very moment when it happened.

She had blamed poor little Milly, but it was the flaw, the flaw that had given their deadly point to Milly's interference and Harding's importunity. But for the flaw they could not have penetrated her profound serenity. Her gift might have been trusted to dispose of them.

For before that moment the gift had worked indubitably; it had never missed once. She looked back on its wonders; on the healing of herself; the first healing of Rodney and Harding Powell; the healing of Bella. It had worked with a peculiar rhythm of its own, and always in a strict, a measurable proportion to the purity of her intention. To Harding's case she had brought nothing but innocent love and clean compassion; to Bella's nothing but a selfless and beneficent desire to help. And because in Bella's case at least she had been flawless, out of the three Bella's was the only cure that had lasted. It had most marvellously endured. And because of the flaw in her she had left Harding worse than she had found him. No wonder that poor Milly had reproached her.

It mattered nothing that Milly's reproaches went too far, that in Milly's eyes she stood suspected of material sin (anything short of the tangible had never been enough for Milly); it mattered nothing that (though Milly mightn't believe it) she had sinned only in her thought; for Agatha, who knew, that was enough; more than enough; it counted more.

For thought went wider and deeper than any deed; it was of the very order of the Powers intangible wherewith she had worked. Why, thoughts unborn and shapeless, that ran under the threshold and hide there, counted more in that world where It, the Unuttered, the Hidden and the Secret, reigned.

She knew now that her surrender of last night had been the ultimate deliverance. She was not afraid any more to meet Rodney; for she had been made pure from desire; she was safeguarded for ever.

He had been gone about an hour when she heard him at the gate again and in the room below.

She went down to him. He came forward to meet her as she entered he closed the door behind them; but her eyes held them apart.

"Did you not get my wire?" she said.

"Yes. I got it."

"Then why....."

"Why did I come? Because I knew what was happening. I wasn't going to leave you here for Powell to terrify you out of your life."

"Surely—you thought they'd gone?"

"I knew they hadn't or you wouldn't have wired."

"But I would. I'd have wired in any case."

"To put me off?"

"To—put—you—off."

"Why?"

He questioned without divination or forewarning. The veil of flesh was as yet over his eyes, so that he could not see.

"Because I didn't mean that you should come, that you should ever come again, Rodney.

He smiled.

"So you went back on me, did you?"

"If you call it going back."

She longed for him to see.

"That was only because you were frightened," he said.

He turned from her and paced the room uneasily, as if he saw. Presently he drew up by the hearth and stood there for a moment, puzzling it out; and she thought that he had seen.

He hadn't. He faced her with a smile again.

"But it was no good, dear, was it? As if I wouldn't know what it meant. You wouldn't have done it if you hadn't been ill. You lost your nerve. No wonder, with those Powells preying on you, body and soul, for weeks."

"No, Rodney, no. I didn't *want* you to come back. And I think—now—it would be better if you didn't stay."

It seemed to her now that perhaps he had seen and was fighting what he saw.

"I'm not going to stay," he said, "I am going—in another hour—to take Powell away somewhere."

He took it up where she had made him leave it. "Then, Agatha, I shall come back again. I shall come back—let me see—on Sunday."

She swept that aside.

"Where are you going to take him?"

"To a man I know who'll look after him."

"Oh, Rodney, it'll break Milly's heart."

She had come, in her agitation, to where he stood. She sat on the couch by the corner of the hearth, and he looked down at her there.

"No," he said, "it won't. It'll give him a chance to get all right. I've convinced her it's the only thing to do. He can't be left here for you to look after."

"Did she tell you?"

"She wouldn't have told me a thing if I hadn't made her. I dragged it out of her, bit by bit."

"Rodney, that was cruel of you."

"Was it? I don't care. I'd have done it if she'd bled."

"What did she tell you?"

"Pretty nearly everything, I imagine. Quite enough for me to see what, between them, they've been doing to you."

"Did she tell you *how he got well?*"

He did not answer all at once. It was as if he drew back before the question, alien and disturbed, shirking the discerned, yet unintelligible issue.

"Did she tell you, Rodney?" Agatha repeated.

"Well, yes. She *told* me."

He seemed to be making, reluctantly, some admission. He sat down beside her, and his movement had the air of ending the discussion. But he did not look at her.

"What do you make of it?" she said.

This time he winced visibly.

"I don't make anything. If it happened—if it happened—like *that*, Agatha . . ."

"It did happen."

"Well, I admit it was uncommonly queer."

He left it there and reverted to his theme.

"But it's no wonder—if you sat down to that for six weeks—it's no wonder you got scared. It's inconceivable to me how that woman could have let you in for him. She knew what he was."

"She didn't know what I was doing till it was done."

"She'd no business to let you go on with it when she did know."

"Ah! but she knew—then—that it was all right."

"All right?"

"Absolutely right. Rodney . . ." She called to him as if she would compel him to see it as it was. "I did no more for him than I did for you and Bella."

He started. "Bella?" he repeated.

He stared at her. He had seen something.

"You wondered how she got all right, didn't you?"

He said nothing.

"That was how."

And still he did not speak. He sat there, leaning forward, staring now at his own clasped hands. He looked as if he bowed himself before the irrefutable.

"And there was you, too, before that."

"I know," he said then; "I can understand *that*. But—why Bella?"

"Because Bella was the only way."

She had not followed his thoughts nor he hers.

"The only way?" he said.

"To work it. To keep the thing pure. I had to be certain of my motive, and I knew that if I could give Bella back to you that would prove—to me, I mean—that it was pure."

"But Bella," he said softly—"Bella. Powell I can understand—and me."

It was clear that he could get over all the rest. But he could not get over Bella. Bella's case convinced him. Bella's case could not be explained away or set aside. Before Bella's case he was baffled, utterly defeated. He faced it with a certain awe.

"You were right, after all, about Bella," he said at last. "And so was I. She didn't care for me, as I told you. But she does care now."

She knew it.

"That was what I was trying for," she said. "That was what I meant."

"You meant it?"

"It was the only way. That's why I didn't want you to come back."

He sat silent, taking that in.

"Don't you see now how it works? You have to be pure crystal. That's why I didn't want you to come back."

Obscurely, through the veil of flesh, he saw.

"And I am never to come back?" he said.

"You will not need to come."

"You mean you won't want me?"

"No. I shall not want you. Because, when I did want you it broke down."

He smiled.

"I see. When you want me, it breaks down."

He rallied for a moment. He made his one last pitiful stand against the supernatural thing that was conquering him.

He had risen to go.

"And when *I* want to come, when I long for you, what then?"

"*Your* longing will make no difference."

She smiled also, as if she foresaw how it would work, and that soon, very soon, he would cease to long for her.

His hand was on the door. He smiled back at her.

"I don't want to shake your faith in it," he said.

"You can't shake my faith in It."

"Still—it breaks down. It breaks down," he cried.

"Never. You don't understand," she said. "It was the flaw in the crystal."

Soon, very soon he would know it. Already he had shown submission.

She had no doubt of the working of the Power. Bella remained as a sign that it had once been, and that, given the flawless crystal, it should be again.

The Pass of the River.

By R. B. Cunninghame Graham.

THE river spread out broad, but swift and deep, just underneath the little town, which stood upon a sandy bank, the white-washed, flat-roofed houses, appearing from the far side of the pass, buried in gardens and in trees. To the east, the river's banks were buried in a forest of *ñandubay*, of *coronillo*, and *chañar*. In the great bend it formed, the *monte* grew so thickly that when you penetrated it in search of horses, or to put up strayed cattle, to the *rodeo*, it seemed you were in another world from that of the open grassy prairies, only a league away.

Paths ran about between the thickets, passing round clumps of tunas, and avoiding pools. The scent came from the blossoms of the *espinillo de olor*, and from the *arasá*, filling the nostrils with a perfume almost of the tropics; the creeping plants in places bound the thickets in a net of living cordage—impenetrable, mysterious, and as if nature had set a challenge to mankind, saying, "Thus far....but there are secrets that you shall not solve."

Birds, as the little black-and-white *viudita*, with its forked, twitching tail; the plump, metallic-looking, purple-winged *jacú*; the francolin, and half a hundred others, flashed across the path. From overhanging boughs the nests of the hornero hung. Humming birds poised themselves, brighter than jacinths, more iridiscent than the beryl, as they sucked the honey from the great trumpet-shaped and dark red fleshy tuna flowers. Closer to the river, cormorants sat meditating on bald boughs, and in the stream aigrets and herons fished, whilst gorgeous kingfishers flitted across the surface of the water and disappeared into the sedge.

Mares, with long, ropy manes, stood feeding in the clearings: then bounded back into the bush with a sharp snort at the first sight of man. Domestic cattle that had gone wild, bellowed and pawed the ground as you passed on your way, as if they somehow, in some mysterious way, remembered that their ancestors had one day

been as free as were the forest deer—shyest of all the animals in the River Plate.

Such was the river on the east.

Towards the north, a line of stony hills, not high, but steep, extended towards the frontiers of Brazil. The grass grew wiry on them, and the stones seemed to have been strewn by accident; between them sprung up tufts of thorny bush.

The hills ended about a league or two from the river bank, leaving a space of open prairie to the west, which gradually shelved down towards the Pass.

Tracks, like those that the Arabs make all through the desert, made their appearance several hundred yards before the last descent; but tracks not made by wheels, for nothing but the weekly diligence and a rare bullock cart or two ever passed on the road. Horses and mules and cattle, flocks of sheep and still more horses, mules and cattle and more flocks of sheep, were what had made the tracks; and yet the prairie was so wide, the carpet of long grass so strong, that almost all tracks ceased when once the trail had come out on the plains. From the last little rise, one saw the river, yellowish-green, and swirling quietly in its channel, making smooth whirlpools, here and there. It ran so silently, it looked like oil, and now and then small landslips, either of sand or mud, fell with a splash into the stream that undermined the banks. Occasionally a fish sprang from the water and then fell back with a loud crash, and now and then a water tortoise raised its head. The pass itself spread out about a quarter of a mile in width, and on the land side to the west stood several straw ranches and a white flat-topped *pulperia*, known as the "Twenty-Fifth of May."

A row of posts for hitching horses were driven deep into the ground before the door, and at them all the day stood horses blinking in the sun. The *cojinillos* of the saddles were doubled forward over the pommel to keep the seat cool in hot weather or dry in rain, whilst the reins were secured by a *tiento* to prevent them falling down and being stepped upon. Sometimes a man, emerging from the *pulperia*, with a gin bottle in his hand, or bag of *yerba*, placed them in his *maleta*, and carefully undoing his *cabestro* saddled up his horse, putting his foot against its side, and then, mounting easily, settled his wide *bombachas* or his *chiripá*, and struck into

the road towards the "camp" at a slow *trotecito*, which after a hundred yards or so he changed to the slow gallop of the plains, his right arm moving rhythmically up and down as he allowed his whip to dangle on his horse's flanks to keep him to his pace.

Some of the horses at the hitching posts were saddled with old *recaos* covered with sheepskins, and others blazed with silver, and now and then a wild-eyed *redomon* sat back and snorted when an incautious stranger came too near.

Occasionally three or four men came out together, some of them half drunk; but in an instant all had mounted lightly, and so to speak took wing, just like a flight of birds. No diving for their stirrups, and no snatching at the reins, no sticking out the body in an undignified position as they got up, and no resounding whack of the leg on the off-side of the horse, after the European style, ever occurred amongst these centaurs as they rode slowly off. Occasionally a man who had drunk too freely of *Carlón* or of *Cachaza*, and topped up with some gin, swayed in his saddle, but his horse seemed to catch him as he swayed, so perfect was his balance, and so firm his grasp between the thighs.

A stout stockade of posts of *ñandubay* set "*palo a pique*" was thrown about the house, leaving the entrance narrow enough to close with a long pole, a precaution which at times was not unneeded, when some Gaucho tried to ride into the court.

The actual door led into a low room in which a counter ran from wall to wall, surmounted by a railing of light wood, in which a little trap was cut; through it the owner passed the drinks, the boxes of sardines, the pounds of raisins or of figs, which constituted his chief articles of trade.

Outside the counter lounged the customers, for in those days the *pulperia* was a sort of unofficial club to which the idlers of the district all resorted, to wile away their time. The clank of spurs sounded like fetters on the hard mud floor, and night and day a cracked guitar, with either every string fashioned of wire, or else the catgut mended up with strips of hide, twangled eternally. The *payador*, if so be that there was one present, took it of right, and after tuning up—an operation which generally took some time—played silently for a few bars, usually only a few

simple chords, and then struck into a wild song, sung in a high falsetto, prolonging all the vowels and finishing upon the highest note he could attain. These songs almost invariably dealt with love, and were of the most melancholy complexion, according strangely with the fierce look and wild appearance of the singer and the grim faces of the listeners.

Occasionally a man would rise, and coming to the window in the railing say "*Carlón,*" and would receive the dark-red, heady Catalonian wine in a tin mug that held about a pint, and pass it round to all the loungers, beginning always with the *payador.*

In North America, upon the prairies in similar circumstances, you kicked the counter and said "How," with perhaps the addition of "Boys, here's the hair off your heads"; but at the *pulperia* upon the Yi, the etiquette was to take the mug and murmur "*gracias,*" or if you were a man of parts some pretty phrase or other, for though all men the whole world over are the slaves of etiquette, in different lands, it takes a different form, just as one star differs from another in brightness and in size.

Men would come in, and, after salutations, drink silently and go, touching their hats, and others instantly plunge into a conversation about the almost certain revolution or any other topic of the "camp," just as men do in clubs, where some make friends and others pass their lives hedged in behind their collars, speaking to nobody. Occasionally a fight would come about after a quarrel, and sometimes two known *valientes* would challenge one another to fight until first blood, the loser to pay a pint of wine or something of the kind.

That was the time for elaborate preparations. Spurs would be taken off and given to the *pulpero* and ponchos rolled about the arm. Then some authority would instruct the combatants where the knives should be held, leaving an inch, two inches, or the half blade beyond the hand, and the two heroes would begin. These contests were more formal than when they fought in earnest, and body blows were barred. Usually, after springing to and fro like cats, parrying, passing and crouching low, catching the blows upon their arms defended by their summer ponchos, they would pause for breath, whilst the assistants criticized the strokes. As all the cuts were levelled either at the arm or face, the contest sometimes lasted five or

six minutes, and when at last the blood was drawn the beaten man, calling for wine, handed it courteously to his opponent, who passed it back to him, with many compliments. This was the summer weather, so to speak, of *pulperia* life, but now and then a sudden fury, after a bout of drink or any cause, would make some man get up vociferating like a maniac and drawing his *facón*.

Such a sight I remember once, not at the *pulperia* on the Yi, but near Bahia Blanca, where a grim old man, his long grey hair hanging a foot or more upon his shoulders, suddenly bounded on the floor, and drawing his long knife, beat furiously upon the counter and the walls, yelling out, "*Viva Rosas, mueran los unitarios Salvajes*," and foaming at the mouth. He looked so terrible that most of those assembled either drew their arms, or sliding out like cats to the *palenque* took the *maneas* off their horses, and stood waiting by their sides. The *pulpero* hurriedly drew down his window, then taking his revolver in his left hand, carefully placed some empty bottles in a row upon the counter, ready to throw upon the crowd. After a minute, which, I confess, seemed longer than an hour, and after having menaced every one with death unless they cried out "*Viva Rosas*," the old man's knife fell from his hand upon the ground, and he himself, tottering towards a seat, sat silent, rocking himself to and fro, and mumbling in his beard. The Gauchos sheathed their knives, and one of them muttered, "He is thinking of the deaths he owed when he was young. Leave him in peace."

The owner of the *pulperia* on the Yi was one Eduardo Peña, a sort of cross between a Gaucho and a townsman, wearing a coat and waistcoat, but no shirt collar, and with his loose *bombachas* tucked into high riding boots with patent leather tops, worked with an eagle in red thread. Tall and athletic, the lump inside his coat by his right elbow showed where his pistol was, and everybody knew in politics he was a Blanco, although he generally kept his opinions pretty quiet, being, as he said, "a kind of a guitar for all to play upon."

No one had ever seen him with a good horse to ride, which he explained by saying he was half a sailor, being the owner of the *balsa* on the Pass.

The *balsa*, a flying bridge, worked by men pulling on a rope, which was swept across the river by the action of the stream, gave Eduardo Peña a position of importance

midway between the dignity of an *estanciero* and of a merchant in the town.

Although there was a ford in average weather, three or four hundred yards above the flying bridge, few used it, as it was deep and dangerous, the bottom full of holes, and after several hours of rain became impassable.

Lounging about the river's edges stood the *balseros*, generally Correntinos, an amphibious race of men, as much at home in a canoe as on a horse's back, tall, slight, and Indian-looking, talking a curious dialect of Spanish, all mixed with Guarani.

A colony of little huts, some made of straw and others out of old tin cans, was set about a hundred yards from the water-side. In them lived several *chinas*, who drove a thriving trade in love amongst the passers-by. One or two of them, such as "*Boton de Oro*" and "*Molinillo de Cafe*," and in especial a half-Indian girl, known as "*La Laucha*," almost deserve a place in history, considering the time they lived about the place and their resisting powers.

All of them on occasions were ready with their knives, and it would have been a bold man indeed who tried to better them at playing "*monte*" or "*la taba*," or any of the games, so called, of chance played by the *habitués* of the Pass.

As all the whole world over extremes meet, it was curious to see how the old customs of the Greeks were to be seen in the straw ranchos near the *balsa* on the Yi. If any of the *chinas* were employed on what for want of a more explicit term we may refer to as *un ouvrage de dames*, she dropped the mare's hide which served as door, and no one troubled her, just as in Hellas, ladies of the same profession were wont to close their doors. All the night long the tinkling of guitars came from the ranchos, and usually by day the occupants slept and recuperated until the evening, when they came out and sat at the receipt of custom, and hence the name of "*Las Murciélagas*," by which they all were known. Although the river ran within a hundred yards of their straw ranchos, no one had ever seen one of these "bats" bathe or do anything but draw a can of water from its stream. Had they been asked, it is not improbable that they had answered, "Only Indians bathe. We are Christians and clean," or something of the kind. So does the pride of race blind people to

their welfare, and take away all of our senses, including that of smell. Day in, day out, horses and cattle waited at the Pass, their owners hailing the *balsa*, which was safe to be upon the other side, and sitting, with one leg crossed on the pommel of the saddle, smoking their cigarettes.

A fine green dust, composed of every kind of animal manure, filled all the air upon fine days, and as there were no trees within a quarter of a mile, the heat was tropical, and the few *enramadas* which stood about for shelter sure to be occupied.

The cattle hung their heads as if they had been on *rodeo*, and the peons, placed upon the bank for fear of a stampede, slumbered upon their saddles, though with one eye always half open for the first sign of movement in the herd. Sometimes a troop of mules, wild and unbroken, coming from Brazil, gave more excitement, for the first sight of the great *balsa* arriving at the bank was sure to frighten them, when in a moment, in a cloud of dust, they disappeared into the camp, the negro peons from Rio Grande rushing to head them back. Sometimes the owner or his *capataz*, a dark Brazilian riding a horse covered with silver trappings, his saddle kept in place by a crupper—a most unusual thing amongst the Gauchos of the plains—wearing a sword stuck through his girths, and with a pair of silver-mounted pistols at his saddle-bow, by dint of galloping was able to head the troop into a swamp or angle of the river, or against some wood, and gradually get them calmed down and manageable. All generally went well as long as the frightened animals could be kept all together, but if they separated and cut out into points, days might elapse before the troop again was got up to the Pass. As mules that once had been stampeded were always liable to stampede again, the utmost care was needed to make them by degrees, and twenty at a time, enter the *balsa* and allow themselves to be transported to the other side.

Occasionally all efforts were in vain. Then came the time for Don Eduardo Peña and his men. After having hired all the men who were available, the troop was taken to the ford. Two Correntinos in canoes, one up the stream and one below, lay on their paddles ready to keep the swimming animals from getting washed away. Gently, and with infinite precaution, they were conducted to the ford, and when at last they all were huddled on the bank

and stood there terrified, the mounted men closed in upon them with a shout. Forcing their horses up against the mules, they yelled, and swung their *lazos* and their whips. At last some mule, bolder or more experienced than the rest, would stretch its ears out towards the water and take a cautious step. Then was the time for noise to cease, for mules are twenty times more self-reliant than are horses, and it was ten to one if the first mule should enter, the rest would follow him.

If the first mule took his decision and began to swim, others soon followed, and by degrees the troop would take the water, their heads sticking out straight like camels, and a faint line of back appearing as they swam.

In their canoes the Correntinos splashed water with their paddles to keep the animals together, and when the whole were swimming, paddled beside them to prevent them turning back. The Brazilian negroes crossed, swimming on their horses, and the *capataz*, when he had seen them land and gather up the mules into a bunch, rode slowly to the *balsa*, and forcing in his horse by dint of spurring was taken over dry.

Sometimes he too had his adventures, as one who, I remember, riding a half-tamed horse, had it jump with him on its back over the railing of the *balsa* in the middle of the stream. Swearing in Portuguese, and spouting water like a whale, he clambered back again, but, like a perfect Gaucho as he was, still holding fast the reins. His horse swam after him, and the fierce current carried it sideways till it lay helpless, when it was towed along.

His *cojinillo* was turned back, showing a pair of *boleadores* which he had placed across the saddle underneath the seat. Little by little the current washed them off, amidst the laughter of the people on the raft. Just as they seemed about to disappear, a Gaucho, sitting on his horse, threw himself sideways, and, hanging by his heel caught them upon the end of his *facón*.

The discomfited Brazilian, both his hands occupied in keeping up his horse's head, murmured a "*muito obrigado*," amid the laughter of the crowd.

All day the *balsa* journeyed to and fro, and Don Eduardo Peña lounged about, smoking and taking his receipts, varying his occupation by an occasional visit to his *pulperia*, to take a vermouth or a vino seco with a friend.

All day the stream of life, going northward to Brazil

and south towards the capital, was focussed at the Pass.

Horsemen as still as statues waited for their turn, the only sign they were alive being when their horses shook their heads, making the *coscojo* of the bit rattle against their teeth.

Horsemen came up at a slow *trotecito*, their horses playing with the bit, the riders' hands holding the reins as lightly as they had been silk threads, and other horsemen came up with a succession of wild snorts and bounds, their *redomones* shying from the *balsa*, and only entering it after a stubborn fight. Great herds of cattle, flocks of sheep, long trains of bullock carts loaded with wool, and, once a week, the diligence, drawn by six horses, with a boy riding a seventh fastened by a *lazo* from the cinch to a great iron hook upon the pole, passed with a rattle of glass windows, in a dense cloud of dust.

Such were the humours of the Pass, focus and brief epitome of Gaucho life in Uruguay.

Now without doubt a hideous iron bridge stretches across the Yi. Trains pass and rumble, and out of them lean passengers who look out at the Pass, which once was the chief interest of all life between Durazno and San Fructuoso, in a perfunctory way, then ring the bell and ask how long a time they have to wait before the dinner hour.

Robert Browning.

(May 7th, 1812–1912.)

By Darrell Figgis.

THE seeming inevitableness with which contemporary criticism has gone astray in its judgments on Poets and their Poetry is, from one point of view, one of the humours of English literature. Looking over the calm, imperturbable way in which Poetry has taken its splendid passage through the years, unmindful of any—unmindful chiefly of the clamorous critics who have stood at byways like showmen loudly voicing the claims of their byway to be Poesy's highway, and hurrying up the highway in the end with more speed than dignity—is, in the main, more a happy than an unhappy spectacle. It is, at any rate, a salutary spectacle: though, from the nature of the case, it is difficult to see how it can be other than so to the end of days, seeing it is the especial business of the Poet to bring something that shall increase the vision of men, to which, therefore, the vision of men shall need time to adjust itself. And it is a spectacle that stretches back further than we are inclined to think. For example, we imagine Shakespeare as overtopping handsomely the age which he, with his sovereign, shares in naming; and we trick his contemporaries out in our own imaginations. It is our thought, however: not theirs. It was not for his greatness Shakespeare was praised by his own age; not for the amazing and mingled omniscience and exaltation of him; but for his sugary sweetness, his fertility and invention, if not indeed his graciousness of person. A careful reading of the literature of the time makes it tolerably clear that to the men of their day it was Ben Jonson and not Shakespeare who overtopped his time. The echo of this can be heard quite clearly in Milton. So, too, when Blake sang, it was Crabbe and not he whom the critics crowned. Not Wordsworth, but Thomas Campbell and Walter Scott, won their plaudit. With that

plaudit in his ear Campbell jested on Shelley, who was rejected as a " pestiferous mixture of blasphemy, sedition, and sensuality " by those who acclaimed Byron. Not only so : not only content to choose with unerring wrongness the indifferent of two names both with a claim to memory, Keats, as Shelley shrewdly pointed out at the time, was rejected where even the poetical works of Dean Milman were loudly praised.

After so immediate an unhappy memory singing in their ears, one would have thought that critics, however much they might have desired to laud Tennyson, would have been tender in disparaging Browning. After having dismissed as blasphemous and sensual a poet whom all now see as burning in the white light of purity, singular purity, and holy desire, one would have imagined that critics would not so quickly have rushed to say that Browning's phrasing was obscure, and that he was difficult to read, faced by the fact that his phrasing is seldom, if ever, so obscure as Shakespeare's, whereas, apart from ' Sordello,' he is no whit more difficult to read than is Milton. But the trouble sprang from a deep cause. As in the case of Blake and Wordsworth and Shelley, so again in the case of Browning, critics were not willing to accept, they either superciliously rejected or superficially neglected, the poet's point of view ; whereas it would seem a commonplace that it is not until a poet's point of view has been accepted that his burning vision can be seen. It is for this reason that a poet seldom sings to his own generation. He must, it seems, always wait till at least another layer beneath shall have formed itself. It is chastening to think that a poet when he sings, sings to an audience that is framing the alphabet in its mind—is taking the first steps of progress towards his song and his vision.

With Browning, however, the interest is heightened by the peculiar nature of the problem he set. Steadily and firmly he has brushed aside one and another, till it is not too much to say that he has emerged, or is like to emerge, in the foremost rank of English poets, with such as Shakespeare, Milton, Blake, Wordsworth, and Shelley for companions ; yet it must be admitted that, standing there, there is an oddness about his presence in that company. His own age, we know, regarded him less as a poet than as a consummate diner-out ; it even attributed the partial success he won with the critics in ' The Ring and

the Book' to the operation of that social advantage. In Lockhart's phrase, he did not at all look "like a damned literary man," whereas Tennyson, with whom he naturally stood in contemporary comparison, looked his part even to the matter of raiment. Nor is it only a matter of personal appearance or habit of life. However much these things may have influenced his contemporaries, they can have little hold on those who have not seen him plain, and have not stopped and talked to him; and yet the mind is so clothed with cant meanings of what poetry is that it will turn with distaste from the shallowness and smugness of 'The Idylls of the King,' and still think of it as undeniable poetry, even while it denies that name to 'Men and Women,' which it may read and re-read with increasing joy. Comparisons are undesirable; nevertheless, as the poets themselves appeared, so their poetry. Tennyson's poetry answers to the immediate and more obvious meaning of the word poetry, even when it is least satisfactory, while Browning's poetry seems always to avoid it.

In his essay on Shelley's poetry Browning divided poets into two main divisions: objective and subjective; the fashioner or maker of beings independent of himself, and the seer or diviner of new correspondences between the universe and its Deity. It is, as most distinctions are, more an aid to thinking than a glance into the inner shrine of vision; yet it is serviceable as providing a clue to Browning's own procedure. He himself set the seer above the fashioner; yet, in spite of his sympathy with Shelley's poetry and its marked effect on his early work, it was the fashioner's and not the seer's way of work that was his. The seer sings out of his own personality: what he sings is what he himself has seen. Browning seems ever to need some other personality whom he may fashion to sing for him. He seems never to be able to get at grips with Reality till he is able to approach it in the guise of another's soul. In 'Dramatic Lyrics' he sang:—

> Round the cape of a sudden came the sea,
> And the sun looked over the mountain's rim:
> And straight was a path of gold for him,
> And the need of the world of men for me.

It was in very truth a need. To the seer—to such a seer as Wordsworth, for instance—Nature means much. Nature is the lap where he may stand and look into the burning

face of God. Nature is flaming with signs and hints of correspondences between things that link the universe into an irrefragable unity, so that a metaphor or simile becomes no mere literary exercise, but the startling discovery of some new at-one-ment between things, and imagery, such imagery as trails through the 'Ode on the Intimations of Immortality,' takes rank as authentic vision and not fanciful decoration. To Browning, too, doubtless Nature meant much. There are lines and passages in his poetry that recur to the memory, aspects of her seen or described in such a way as to make it evident that he saw her with far more than merely the painter's eye. Yet she had no direct vision to convey to him. Indeed, he seems almost uncomfortable in her presence, as though irked by the vision he knows there, feels there, but cannot quite see, and anxious to return to his refuge among the world of men, to see with their eyes and grope with their hands. Or as he sang in the roaring Epilogue to 'Pacchiarotto,' in which he smote—so soundly smote and so lustily smote—his inconsistent critics :—

> Man's thoughts and loves and hates!
> Earth is my vineyard, these grew there:
> From grape of the ground, I made and marred
> My vintage; easy the task or hard,
> Who set it—his praise be my reward!
> Earth's yield! Who yearn for the Dark Blue Sea's,
> Let them "lay, pray, bray"—the addle-pates!
> Mine be man's thoughts, loves, hates!

"Earth is my vineyard": so he sings. But earth was more than his vineyard: earth was also his refuge. When "the sun looked over the mountain's rim," then, and chiefly then, as he looked down the "path of gold," the "need of a world of men" became most urgent. In the Prologue to 'Fifine at the Fair' he has a fancy that he "swam out far in the bay," and as he swam there in a manner of flight, heaven above and water beneath,

> Yes! there came floating by
> Me, who lay floating too,
> Such a strange butterfly!
> Creature as dear as new.

The butterfly's is flight indeed, in its natural element; his is only a mimicry of flight in an

> uncouth play
> Of limbs that slip the fetter,
> Pretend as they were not clay.

He fancies them tasting of flight thus, flight through the heaven that is poetry, the poetry that is heaven, to

the Reality of which one is the vision and the other is the splendour. Yet—

> And meantime, yonder streak
> Meets the horizon's verge ;
> That is the land to seek
> If we tire or dread the surge :
>
> Land the solid and safe—
> To welcome again (confess !)
> When, high and dry, we chafe
> The body, and don the dress.
>
> Does she look, pity, wonder
> At one who mimics flight,
> Swims—heaven above, sea under,
> Yet always earth in sight ?

But the "world of men" was even yet more than a refuge or a vineyard. "I have, you are to know," he once wrote to a correspondent, "such a love for flowers and leaves, that I every now and then in an impatience at being unable to possess them thoroughly, to see them quite, satiate myself with their scent—bite them to bits." It is that very impatience that thwarts him in seeking to pluck the mystery of things for himself. Put a rose into his hand, and what does it mean ? It makes him impatient ; it, as has been said, irks him. But put that rose into the hands of one of his world of men : into, say, the hands of John of Halberstadt : what then ? Why, then,—

> He with a "look you !" vents a brace of rhymes,
> And in there breaks the sudden rose itself,
> Over us, under, round us every side,
> Nay, in and out the tables and the chairs
> And musty volumes, Boehme's book and all,—
> Buries us with a glory, young once more,
> Pouring heaven into this shut house of life.

It was as if, looking to see what the rose meant to John of Halberstadt, it came upon him with a sudden uprush what the rose meant to him. Not only did the attempt to see reality through the eyes of another give him an intentness and patience that otherwise he might have lacked, but, striking along the lines of his receptivity, it made the world of men his stepping-stone to reality.

Thus, he was no mere maker of men and women in the purely objective sense. He was not merely the creator of men in their "thoughts, loves, hates," content if he could present them living as Scott and Crabbe did. His creatures became eyes and ears to him wherewith to see and hear things more sharply and intensely than he himself could.

They became as so many cloaks to him, clothed in whom he could enter at once through divers doors of the Temple of Truth. Through them all he could see the much-more that would have escaped a single vision; and in them each he captured the intentness that annulled the irresolution consequent on confusion. For example: is it the coming of Christianity into the world? How shall a man such as he, a man with a strong bent for strange philosophical research, a man instinct with classic culture, and a man, moreover, whose whole soul rose insurgent for a revelation of love in a world whose being and whose laws made love a paradox otherwise inconceivable — how shall such a man state his attitude to that? His acceptance he did assert. But how little that expressed him! What worlds remained untold! What said the philosopher there? How spake the artist whose business it was to make Beauty, and who thereby took into his hands the cup of joy for ever, stirring unquenchable thirsts in him? Not in his proper affirmation could he utter all that. But take the three poems that celebrate the dawn of Christianity into the world! Cleon, as a Greek, may reject the teaching of "a mere barbarian Jew," yet it is clear that the teaching of the mere barbarian Jew brings him just that cool cup that his art has set him athirst for. Karshish, the Arab physician, in 'An Epistle,' and John in 'A Death in the Desert,' on the one hand and the other, show the impact of this new revelation on minds inclined to curious philosophical learning and full of quick personal aspiration.

Or is it the attitude of the Artist to his Art? We who have all Browning's work before us know that there was in him the possibility of the artist who could turn away resolutely from vulgar success, in the secrecy of his own soul to work the thing that pleased him; that there was also the artist who could happily take all good things, or seeming good things, as they came (the artist that wrote "How we carried the good news to Ghent"); and also the artist whose labour consistently was to express the thing just beyond his reach, and who knew that to fail to reach forward would be to fall into sterility, perfect or imperfect. He was not one of these, but at one time all three. Each expressed no more than a facet of himself; and he could discover each facet in turn by looking at Art through such different temperaments as those of Pictor Ignotus, Fra Lippo Lippi, and Andrea del Sarto in the unique trilogy

in 'Men and Women.'* Nor is it merely that he expressed himself in this way. In expressing himself so he discovered himself so.

In this he is, in the terms of his own distinction, not only a fashioner, but a seer also. He is a seer through the creatures he has fashioned. Indeed, he is only interested in his creatures at those angles of their lives that are full of crisis—as though it was then, and then only, he could look through them to the realities beyond that caught his interest, they being opaque to him at all other whiles. It was that one vivid situation in Andrea del Sarto's life, that one crucial moment when his life spread itself out before him like a drama, that Browning was interested in; and only in Andrea del Sarto for the sake of that moment. In the picture from which Browning drew his conception, the situation is so vivid that, with the poem before us, it is not difficult to see him looking through it to the interest beyond. A variety of things may help to create such a situation and such a moment: a chance meeting in 'Dîs aliter Visum,' an indiscreet discovery in 'Fra Lippo Lippi,' the fullness of achievement in 'Abt Vogler'; but it is the situation that matters, for it is then that his characters become illumined with new meaning. It is only at such moments that the creatures can lend the creator eyes and ears to see and hear withal.

A "fashioner," or objective poet, is usually in the habit of seeking a dramatic guise for his workmanship; and it is not surprising to see that the majority of Browning's early works are all dramatic. Yet a dramatic poet is interested in his characters for their own sakes, and not merely for what they may mean to him at one moment of their lives. He may be, and according to the greatness of his genius he will be, interested in the destiny they may suggest; and this will be suggested in the tragic or comic solution they between them will achieve. In other words, however deeply he may see into them, he sees them from without; he is not so much concerned with any portion of them that is not employed in the dramatic field, but he is vitally concerned with every whit of them that is so employed. With Browning it is different. He is concerned from within outwards. In his dramas there are some portions

* In this I have not taken the position of these three poems in the original editions, but Browning's own later rearrangement, such as is adopted in "The Centenary Edition."

of his characters employed in the dramatic field that interest him but little. They are of little spiritual consequence to him. On the other hand, there are whole phases of character that have no dramatic employment that concern him greatly, for they are of spiritual importance to himself. In other words, his interest is not with the character in his deed, but with the character before the deed, with the possibility ripe in him for an interesting diversity of deed. It is not the action that fascinates his mind, but the burning seed-plot of action, for it is there the dreadful meanings of man's life shift and shape themselves like portents on a stormy sky. As his Luria says to Domizia :—

> To the motive, the endeavour, the heart's self,
> Your quick sense looks : you crown and call aright
> The soul o' the purpose, ere 'tis shaped as act,
> Takes flesh i' the world and clothes itself a king.

It is with this clue that the Pope in ' The Ring and the Book ' dissevers the tangled webs of the story before him, seeking to judge justly and fearlessly, saying :—

> For I am ware it is the seed of act,
> God holds appraising in his hollow palm,
> Not act grown great thence on the world below,
> Leafage and branchage vulgar eyes admire.

In his first of dramas, in what, indeed, is his first notable poem, ' Paracelsus,' he is already so much aware of the bent of his own mind that he declared his intention clearly. In the original Preface he wrote : " Instead of having recourse to an external machinery of incidents to create and evolve the crisis I desire to produce, I have ventured to display somewhat minutely the mood itself in its rise and progress, and have suffered the agency by which it is influenced and determined to be generally discernible in its effects alone, and subordinate throughout, if not altogether excluded ; and this for a reason. I have endeavoured to write a poem, not a drama." And it is clear that he has written a poem, not a drama, although he has couched his poem in the dialogue framework inevitably associated with drama. A careful comparison will show that there is not so wide a difference between ' Paracelsus ' and ' Sordello,' the poem he next engaged on, although one he called a dramatic poem and the other a narrative poem. The machinery of one is dialogue even as the machinery of the other is narrative ; but the chief

business of each poem, what may be called the central purpose of each poem, is enacted in the monologues of each character. It is there we see unwind and unfold the ravelled possibilities of action, of success or failure, and of all that is fateful in the eternal destinies of men. In these monologues we are taken behind the scenes. We leave the footlights without, where the character rings down the coin that he will elect to barter with, the deed that shall give his soul shape whatever be the consequence; and we see the soul with a variety of coinage, true coin or false counter, before him, with a diversity of possible deeds into which he may be content to shape himself, but as yet unsold and unshaped. There is nothing unimportant there; there is no shadow of a possibility there that ranks not equal with all other possibilities. Or as Pippa sang :—

> Say not "a small event!" Why "small"?
> Costs it more pain than this, ye call
> A "great event," should come to pass
> Than that? Untwine me from the mass
> Of deeds which make up life, one deed
> Power may fall short in or exceed!

A curiosity of mood such as this is essentially dramatic, and yet its very nature is to preclude it from the achievement of Drama. Being concerned with souls before the decision of action, it is obviously concerned with men and women before the moment when their several destinies cross and sway one another; and it is this moment that makes Drama. It might be said that Drama is the result of a number of anterior dramatic decisions. The dramatist assumes such decisions as the basis of his workmanship; Browning is concerned with the achievement of such decisions. Had Browning had the telling of the tragedy of Othello we should have had a monologue from Iago giving us the story from his point of view, in order that thereby we might be enabled to see the resolution of decision taking shape in his mind, another from Othello, and another from Desdemona, who would have survived long enough to that end, and it would have been left to Cassio to give us the tragic loading of the bed. Each decision would have been dramatic: but it is the sum total of the decisions that would have made Drama.

It is in this sense that Browning is dramatic; and therefore it is that 'Pippa Passes' is so characteristic a a piece of work of his. In each of the four situations chosen, situations that Pippa conceives as full of happiness,

a fateful decision is pending in the balance. In each case the characters of the situation have their hands irresolutely wandering over a bed of flowers, not knowing which bloom to pluck and wear for shame or glory on their souls. It is this situation that fascinates Browning's interest, because it is this situation that reveals to him with vivid and startling illumination the value of the realities beyond that would else have eluded him: and hence the final influence that sends the hand swiftly down to the blossom of its choice becomes momentous and tragic. No matter how slight it may otherwise seem to be, its value becomes of the highest. Pippa's wandering songs on her one annual holiday are no great matter, it would seem: no more than an idle jest turned against a comrade over wine. But one, as the other, may make or mar a soul for all time.

It is so more or less in all his plays. In his historical plays there may of necessity be less of this (and therefore 'Strafford' is of little consequence in the body of the work); in his later plays it may so overburden the dialogue as to threaten its final disruption into the monologues of 'Men and Women' and 'Dramatis Personæ'; but all the while we feel he is waiting till his characters achieve that particular critical angle when they shall scintillate with their hidden and inner illumination. It is this vivid moment he celebrates in his puzzling lyric, 'My Star':—

All that I know
Of a certain star
Is, it can throw
(Like the angled spar)
Now a dart of red,
Now a dart of blue;
Till my friends have said
They would fain see, too,
My star that dartles the red and the blue!
Then it stops like a bird; like a flower, hangs furled:
They must solace themselves with the Saturn above it.
What matter to me if their star is a world?
Mine has opened its soul to me; therefore I love it.

In one instance, indeed, destructive of all dramatic intention, this "dartling" even continues beyond the limits of the play. In his last play, 'In a Balcony,' perhaps notably his last play, at its moment of conclusion the Queen does not seem even yet to have taken her final decision. It is in her that the play pivots; and when her tragic moment comes, she sees Life snatched from her very hand, and "goes out." What her decision with regard to the lovers is, we are not told. Constance hears the "measured,

heavy tread" of the guard, and the hint is that they are coming to take the lovers to their doom. But we know that much later in life Browning himself earnestly discussed the possibility that the guard is not heard coming to take away the lovers, but to bear away the dead body of the Queen, she slain by her own hand. The Queen's resolve is never taken. The cloudy portents are still to be seen shifting and shaping on the sky.

Thus it is not surprising to see, in course of time, the unnecessary and cumbersome business of dialogue or narrative drop away, to leave the self-revealing monologue standing in its naked strength. In the third volume of 'Bells and Pomegranates,' entitled 'Dramatic Lyrics,' Browning had already been looking at Life through the vision of men and women, creatures of his. Only then, though the lyrics were dramatic in the sense that they expressed the moods and emotions of creatures of Browning, and not of Browning himself, they were not dramatic in the sense that some vital shaping of character was implicit in them. In a sense all lyrics are dramatic; and the critic who gives to the lyric the sense of personal emotion is only and arbitrarily insisting on calling a passing moment eternity. Every true work of Art was lived, and lived intensely, as it was wrought. Thereafter it takes a detached and separate existence. Shakespeare lived Othello when he made him, even as Wordsworth lived 'Tintern Abbey' when he made it. Then, they were subjective; once finished, they became objective, for the soul of man lives on, and passes on, and changes. It is only a question of phraseology. There is no lyric, surely, that expresses all of a man, or even all of him at that one moment of utterance. A lyric can only express a phase of him: and if he choose to place that phase in circumstances other than his own in order to see it the better, it does not at all mean that that phase is not his own.

Yet it was necessary, if dialogue and narrative were to drop away, that the explanations they offered as to the situation implicit in the dramatic resolve or aspiration should be introduced into the monologue; and the suspense of lyric emotion, however long the poem might be in which it is caught and crystallized, is too acute to permit of such explanation. When "Kentish Sir Byng stood for his king, bidding the crop-headed Parliament swing," it was but a great, gay, rollicking hatred of crop-heads and a

breezy love of bright attire and wine-cups as all good Parliamentarians must feel sometimes at the heart of them, or remain but lean-souled men for the lack of it. There was no better ship-money man than Browning, and yet he lived every moment of that lyric. But though it was no more than that, it lent itself very easily to development. It needed but little development to express, by implication, all the various sides of a dramatic situation, if its author were only happy in his choice of a promontory-peak from which the whole country could be viewed with one slow turn of the eye. And it was not likely that the man who sang

> Ah, but a man's reach should exceed his grasp,
> Or what's a heaven for?—

the man who sang boldly

> Stake your counter as boldly every whit,
> Venture as warily, use the same skill,
> Do your best whether winning or losing it,
>
> If you choose to play!—is my principle.
> Let a man contend to the uttermost
> For his life's set prize, be it what it will!
>
> . . . . . .
> . . . . . .
> And the sin I impute to each frustrate ghost
>
> Is—the unlit lamp and the ungirt loin,
> Though the end in sight were a vice, I say—

who maintained that the only man to be held in contempt was he who did not strive loftily and ambitiously, with failure and success as irrelevancies apart—such a man was but little likely to choose a wrong promontory-peak. For his attention was on that which is the secret of all Earth's interest.

So there came about that great sequence of monologues in 'Men and Women' and 'Dramatis Personæ.' It seems inconceivable that the two volumes in which 'Men and Women' made their appearance should have met with so slight an attention. One would have conceived that the critics, seeing a writer with such a diversity of riches in his fee, would, if only from curiosity, have endeavoured to assume Browning's point of view in order to discover what his vision was. Instead of which, they vamped inconsequentialities as to the difficulties of understanding him, whereas the only difficulty was that of discovering and assuming his point of view, of searching to see exactly what

the monologue meant to him, and why he expressed himself through the lips of fifty others in this way. To deny that Browning has his vices of style would be foolish. Relative pronouns are readily dropped; small words are clipped and chipped mercilessly at times; words are taken across his knee and their quantity broken in order to fit them into some position in a line that they have rebelled at; strange words are used, not because of their beauty, but because of his erudition. But these make him aggravating to read, not difficult to understand. Once the point of view of a poem is seen, its difficulties are gone. Even the aggravations often take a new meaning: for it would be clearly foolish to expect the same stately beauty of line from Fra Lippo Lippi as we are to receive from Cleon.

Whether such a development was or was not conscious and deliberate, matters little: the result was amazing enough, for all the critics' neglect. Probably with a man of Browning's faculty of mind—probing, searching, introspective—it was conscious. If it were so, it would explain the shout of joy with which he came upon 'The Old Yellow Book' and the story that lay hidden in it in a perplexed series of legal pleadings and cross-pleadings:—

> Small quarto size, part print part manuscript:
> A book in shape but, really, pure crude fact
> Secreted from man's life when hearts beat hard,
> And brains, high-blooded, ticked two centuries since.

It also explains the story of his at once, on reading the "square old yellow book," taking twelve pebbles from the road and arranging them at equal distances on the parapet bordering it, in representation of the twelve books of the poem; and the fact that he penned in the book, in Greek, the line, "But for me the Muse in her strength prepares her mightiest arrow." His Art was awaiting such a consummation. His use of the monologue, as it had developed in his hand, only needed some such occasion. His previous book had been called 'Dramatis Personæ'; but there the *dramatis personæ* were each of them concerned with his own drama. Their several monologues did not centre round a common story. But the conception of nine *dramatis personæ* (or rather six *dramatis personæ* and three onlookers), each of them in a lengthy monologue telling a single story from his or her own promontory-peak, each seeing the circumambient countryside differently arranged, each occupied with the history of a soul through the various

crises that take the seed of act and develope it into leafage and branchage, giving it shape thereby for all time—such was a conception that might well thrill any artist; but coming, as it did, at a particular moment in the development of Browning's Art, how much more it meant to him cannot easily be said.

And how wonderful the result is! Its gifts are so various that it is difficult not to be tempted into language that loses sight of its origin and cause. Apart altogether from portraiture, for example, let one but read in due order the tale told by the three chief participants, Count Guido Franceschini, Giuseppe Caponsacchi, and Pompilia. Each tale passes over the same incidents of the story; and each carries sympathy and conviction—a sympathy and conviction so complete that it is not easy to remember that there are other tales to be told. In itself this is no inconsiderable feat. It is in itself sufficient to show that the monologue was to Browning, in itself and in its implications, the discovery that should vindicate his Art. But there is the portraiture also; and here, it is necessary to say, Browning has not alone added to, but enriched the creatures of the world's literature. The portraits of 'Men and Women' and 'Dramatis Personæ' were but sketches beside the human knowledge that went to the creation of such men as Count Guido and Giuseppe Caponsacchi. They touch all sides of human life. They nod at all points of the compass. The husband pleading for his life on the indictment of murdering his wife, who, when charged with cruelty towards her, does not deny it, but boldly embarks on the attempt to subdue the charge by frank casuistry, and succeeds, and is not merely arguing but expressing himself, is not a less masterly achievement than the "young, frank, personable priest," who, while serving his church daintily in ladies' service, "a fribble and a coxcomb," yet preserves a pure manliness that, at a glance from a lovely-souled woman in distress, can stand erect in its challenging strength, never doubting the loveliness of her soul in spite of seeming letters to the contrary, finally throwing aside all chance of worldly success for the privilege of merely serving and saving her, afterwards in the teeth of lewd mockery to declare, proudly, that, purely, he loves her.

These two portraits in themselves were a distinction to any artist. But what of Pompilia? There is no doubt

that she meant more to Browning than we imagine. There is an aloofness about her loveliness, a simple frankness withal, that suggests it. It would have been enough in most women to have been, on the one hand, the touchstone to Caponsacchi's true greatness, and, on the other, to have won from the old Pope so very beautiful and humble a tribute as he gives. But her loveliness and purity are not only a rumour. That were an easy thing, perhaps, for a poet to have achieved. But she has to maintain them and make them real in a monologue of nearly two thousand lines: and she succeeds. Join to these Dominus Hyacinthus de Archangelis, counsel for Guido,

> The jolly learned man of middle age,
> Cheek and jowl all in laps with fat and law
> . . . . . .
> Ovidian quip and Ciceronian crank,
> A-bubble in the larynx while he laughs,
> As he had fritters deep down frying there;

Juris Doctor Johannes Baptista Bottinus the Fisc, who, in his irritating zeal for having something to prove, assumes Pompilia's guilt in order to minimize the importance of it; and the old Pope, seeking to judge justly in that light of heaven that is almost falling at his feet; and a gallery of portraits faces us that is not easy to do justice to, save than to say that the poem they help to make is one of the very great things of our literature.

In his later work Browning went on to put the monologue to newer uses yet. Instead of merely declaring and defining the implicit drama, instead only of depicting the ravelled possibilities of action to which the crucial moment of decision came, the character chosen undertook, moreover, to defend, in a wonder of casuistry that puzzles the wit, the action it had decided upon. More than a hint of this was heard in 'Bishop Blougram's Apology' and 'Sludge the Medium,' but it was left to 'Prince Hohenstiel-Schwangau, Saviour of Society,' and 'Fifine at the Fair' to carry out the process in fullness of detail. Here, too, not less than in the simpler use of the monologue, it is not difficult to see Browning using his characters as agents in order to see things that he might have a difficulty in focussing in his own person. Indeed, in these two poems their very difficulty is just this. Time and time again the casuistry breaks, and Browning, through the eyes of his character, is seen looking on the reality beyond. Then the clouds of casuistry roll on again: and it is not easy to say

how far or how thoroughly we may trust the vision he seems to have seen.

It is singular, and yet but fitting, that when he had to see his vision with his own eyes, and declare what he found to say in his own proper person, he lost rather than gained in distinctness. Towards the end of his days a great private loss helped him to make one of his loveliest of the later poems in 'La Saisiaz.' In his earlier days, in 'Christmas Eve and Easter Day,' he made a poem where he told his own story, a poem that his own generation understood where it found in the rest of his work only mystification. The shock of grief, and the seeking for wisdom in grief, give a quiet sunset beauty to 'La Saisiaz' that is searching, whereas the earlier poem jolts and jars against this and that would-be exponent of Christianity; but in neither one nor the other do we seem to hear the authentic tones of Browning as we hear them when he gazes through this artist, as he struggles to express Beauty, or that musician, whose music kindles in him a passion for the moment when his broken, aspiring harmonies shall be completed, uplifted, and made eternal.

Both poems, for different reasons, are unsatisfactory. The man who, in 'Men and Women,' can express himself in such a width of sympathy and understanding, in 'Christmas Eve and Easter Day' finds himself at once at loggerheads with people. Instead of desiring to see through men and women, he was content to let his gaze rest on them; and the result was that they became opaque, and therefore meaningless, to him, and he became unsympathetic and, in the end, brusque. It is hard to conceive that the same man who wrote 'Bishop Blougram's Apology' and 'The Bishop orders his Tomb at St. Praxed's Church' should have written 'Christmas Eve.' Similarly with the later poem: it is difficult to believe that the poet who left only one conclusion to be drawn from the intentness of his vision through Karshish and Cleon should have been content to turn to personal argument in 'La Saisiaz.' Both poems lack distinctness for the simple reason that he was too wide and various a personality to be able to express himself adequately in his own proper person. He could not bring himself to a focus there; but when he can get another to see for him, then indecision is lost, and we get a clear, ringing shout of discovery.

In his last magnificent words he expressed himself as

> One who never turned his back but marched breast forward,
> Never doubted clouds would break,
> Never dreamed, though right were worsted, wrong would triumph
> Held we fall to rise, are baffled to fight better,
> Sleep to wake.

This was the man who expressed himself most fitly in the creatures of his creation. His world of men expressed him as he expressed them, and they helped him to his vision and the distinctness thereof. They gave him width; and through them we catch the true accents of his voice. And if to help us to stand equipped in manliness and womanliness, loving Beauty and seeing Truth, ripe in sympathy and understanding, be any measure of greatness, then, even apart from all else, we must echo Landor and say, "Browning, a great poet, a very great poet indeed."

The Folk-Song Fallacy.

By Ernest Newman.

We have heard a good deal during the last few years of the "national spirit" in music, and the necessity of founding a "national English school" upon the native folk-song. Only in this way, we are told, can English music hope to rise as a whole to the level of that of France and Germany. The people who talk in this way have apparently never stopped to examine very closely the meanings of the terms they are using. The vaguer and more general a word is, the more cautious we should be in our use of it, for it will prove impossible to apply it with the same validity in detail as in the mass.

When we find Mr. Cecil Sharp, for example, telling us that "when every English child is, as a matter of course, made acquainted with the folk-song of his own country, then, from whatever class the musician of the future may spring, he will speak in the national musical idiom," we are constrained to ask—What *is* the "national musical idiom"? It is a high-sounding term, and an easy one to make a certain kind of merely verbal resonance with; but can Mr. Sharp or any one else show us that it has any meaning whatever in terms of concrete fact? If "*the* national musical idiom" is so positive, unmistakable a thing that it will come like second nature to any one who has absorbed a sufficient number of folk-songs, ought we not to be able to isolate the essence of it and express it in some simple verbal formula? Yet who will undertake to do this in connexion with the music of any country? Who could ever hope, for instance, to find one common formula for the idioms of Debussy, d'Indy, Berlioz, Bizet, Saint-Saëns, Bruneau, and Massenet? *Is* there, in fact, such a thing as a French "national musical idiom"? If so, will some ardent partisan of nationalism kindly tell us what it is?

The truth seems to be, as Mill and Huxley long ago pointed out, that of all ways of accounting for the differences between the arts and customs and constitutions of nations,

that of attributing them all to "race" is the most superficial. The lax habit of mind that allows people to be satisfied with these pseudo-explanations almost invariably decoys them into a maze of self-contradiction. Let us look at a few of Sir Hubert Parry's divagations in his excellent 'Art of Music.' He insists more than once upon what he regards as a fundamental distinction between "the Italian" and "the Teutonic" way of conceiving music. The former people aim at "external beauty," the latter at "internal beauty." "The bent of the Germans," he says, speaking of the eighteenth century, "was not so much towards beauty as towards expression and character. Their very type of beauty was different from that of the Italians. The Italians looked for beauty of externals, and the Germans for beauty of thought." This distinction, he holds, is racial in its origin, being visible again in the works of the painters of the two nations. But later on, when he is speaking of the new spirit that Schubert brought into the song, Sir Hubert Parry tells us that "Mozart, *and the Italians among whom he represents the highest type*, usually make long meandering passages of melody with no very definite articulation. The *true Teuton*, aiming at concentration of expression, compresses his thought into figures which are specially definite and telling." The typical Italian, then, is a German! Mozart, in fact, though a German, is not a "true Teuton" like Schubert. It certainly looks as if Schubert's Teutonism were safe enough; but on the very next page Sir Hubert Parry rules him too out of court. Schumann, he says, "was gifted with more of the familiar Teutonic disposition to reflect and look inwards than Schubert, whose gaiety of the Viennese type generally kept him in touch with the outward aspect of things." That is to say, the true Teuton is not a true Teuton in comparison with a truer Teuton! Nay, it even appears that people who are *not* Teutons at all can be truer Teutons than some whose Teutonism is unquestionable. Sir Hubert Parry, in working out a comparison between Mozart and Haydn, says that the latter "is throughout as Teutonic in spirit and manner as it was possible to be in those times, and that most of his work has a high degree of personal characteristic vitality; while Mozart, with more delicate artistic perception, more sense of beauty, a much higher gift of technique and more general facility, is comparatively deficient in individuality, and hardly

shows any trace of Teutonism in style from first to last." From the remark as to Haydn being " as Teutonic as it was possible to be in those times " one would infer that even Teutons are not always as Teutonic on some days as they are on others—which is as if we should apologize for the water not being quite so wet on Friday as it was on Tuesday. But letting that pass, one has to point out gravely that, so far as we know, *Haydn was not a Teuton, but a Slav.* All the modern evidence points in that direction. Dr. Hadow, after reviewing this evidence in the article on Haydn in the new ' Grove,' says that " not only is the general impression of Haydn's music Slavonic rather than Teutonic in character, but many of his own mature compositions are saturated with Croatian folk-songs, to which his own most distinctive melodies bear, both in curve and rhythm, a very noticeable resemblance.... It is hardly too much to say that he stood to the folk-music of Croatia as Burns to the peasant-song of Scotland ; and it may be remembered that, from his appointment at Eisenstadt in 1760 to his journey to England in 1791, he never (except for short visits to Vienna) travelled outside the limits of his native district." And it was this pure Slav who was " as Teutonic as it was possible to be in those times," while Mozart, an undeniable Teuton by birth and environment, represents " the highest type " of the Italian ! Could any argumentation well be wilder ? What conclusion can we come to but that the whole theory of " racial characteristics " in music is flawed to the very centre ?

Is it not the mere beginning of reason in the matter to give up the notion that all the inhabitants of a nation are tarred with the same brush, or even that the " characteristic " work of the nation is being done by people indubitably of one presupposed racial " type " ? Would it not sober the " nationalists " to learn how many men who stand as the " typical " Frenchman or German were either not French or German at all, or only partially so ? The greatest " Frenchman " of modern times—Napoleon—was a pure Italian, without a drop of French blood in his veins. The greatest " English " general—Wellington—was an Irishman, as Lord Roberts is. The greatest modern " English " novelist—George Meredith—was a Welshman. César Franck—a " French " composer—was a Belgian. Offenbach, who wrote the " typical " French comic operas, was a German Jew. Or look at some of the great names

of "German" music. Beethoven was half Dutch; Liszt a pure Hungarian; Joachim a Hungarian Jew; Mahler a Bohemian Jew; Mendelssohn a German Jew; Nikisch is a Hungarian; Richter half Hungarian; Weingartner a Dalmatian. Yet all these people are supposed, in some mysterious way, to express a "national idiom" in their compositions or their performances

How, indeed, can any one who reflects for a moment imagine that complex nations are to be summed up in this style under a single simple formula? What is "the" Englishman? What common denominator is there in the minds or the outlook of such people as Judge Jeffrey and Howard, Browning and Blake, Pope and Mr. Chesterton, Spencer and Keble, Elgar and Bantock, Frith and Hornel? What is the peculiarly and solely "French" characteristic that we find in Montaigne, Rabelais, Pascal, Bossuet, Voltaire, Pierre Louÿs, Debussy, Berlioz, Rameau, Hugo, Gautier, Verlaine, Sully-Prudhomme, and in no German or Italian? We talk of the "French" passion for clarity and concision in art, conveniently forgetting the furious spate of Rabelais's or Hugo's speech. Were these two, then, not "French"? We have Sir Hubert Parry censuring the French for the persistent "theatricalism" and excess that are inseparable from "the Gallic spirit." "Berlioz was so typical a Frenchman in this respect that he could hardly see even the events of his own life as they actually were, but generally in the light of a sort of fevered frenzy, which made everything....look several times larger than the reality." On Sir Hubert Parry's own showing, Berlioz's was an abnormal case; yet he is blandly written down as *the* "typical Frenchman," the fact being ignored that more normal Frenchmen laughed as heartily at his occasional absurdities as any one. If a bombastic imagination and verbal extravagance are "typically French," then Kyd and certain other Elizabethan dramatists must have been Frenchmen. Again one is constrained to ask, can any rational result come out of this welter of unreason?

But let us leave this part of the question for a moment, to return to it later, when we have seen the closer bearing of the claims of the folk-song partisans upon it. The fullest and ablest English statement of these claims is to be found in Mr. Cecil Sharp's book, *English Folk-Song: Some Conclusions*. The basis of his theorizing is that "folk-

song has not been made by the one, but evolved by the many," and that "its *national character* and its fitness to serve a national purpose follow as a natural consequence." Folk-music, in fact, "is generically distinct from ordinary music; the former is not the composition of the individual, and, as such, limited in outlook and appeal, but a communal and racial product, the expression, in musical idiom, of aims and ideals *that are primarily national in character*." Mr. Sharp is, of course, bound to admit that every song must originally have been the work of some one individual; but he contends that the folk-song becomes so changed in its passage from the mouth of one singer to that of another that it is finally a "communal" product. The tacit assumption is always that it is bettered in the process, whereas in point of fact it may be worsened. Imagine, for example, the art of writing music on paper being lost, and a melody of Bach or Brahms being transmitted orally for some generations, often through people of comparatively undeveloped musical intelligence. There can be hardly the least doubt that it would be a worse piece of art at the end of the process than at the beginning. Moreover, Mr. Sharp admits that "it is only very rarely that two singers [*i.e.*, folk-singers] will be found to sing the same song in precisely the same form." Which, then, is the "communal" form? Which represents "the national character"? Mr. Sharp alleges that these variations are "the suggestions of individuals, akin to 'sports' in animal and flower life, which will only be perpetuated if they win the approval of the community....Manifestly those alterations will alone survive which commend themselves to other singers and narrators and are imitated by them. Consequently the folk-tale or song, throughout its life-history, will always be approaching a form which will accurately express the taste and feeling of the community." It is implicit in Mr. Sharp's earlier remark that this is *not* the case. If only one "fittest" type survives, how can it be said that hardly two singers *at the present day* can be found to sing the same song in the same form—for assuredly the process of variation and (presumed) selection has been going on for centuries? Is it not clear that there is at work *no* such selection of the best as takes place in physical nature? And why should we assume that the popular judgment upon the relative values of the variations was at any epoch the correct one? We should not trust

the judgment of any rural Tom, Dick, or Harry in a matter of this kind now. Why should we so idealize the rustic nature of the past as to suppose that *it* had an impeccability of artistic palate that would not be asserted of the village hind of to-day? A good song is as likely as not—perhaps more likely than not—to have been worsened in its passage down the centuries; and if in this sense it represents "the national character," then so much the worse for the national character.

Mr. Sharp attempts to figure the process out as being analogous to the successive improvements that Beethoven, for example, wrought in one of his own melodies. There is no analogy possible. Beethoven's alterations of his first sketch were efforts to realize clearly a personal vision that at first he only saw dimly. No such organic unity of conception can be predicated of a number of chance singers of the same tune. Further, Mr. Sharp admits that untutored folk-singers are always unconsciously altering even a fairly fixed melody through sheer mental instability, bad memory, or imperfect musical intelligence. It may be true to say that this is "the communal mind" shaping the tune to be a more perfect expression of itself, but it seems a little unfair to the community. The folk-singer, on Mr. Sharp's own showing, is frequently only a semi-musical or quite unmusical person. "It is a well-known fact," he writes, "that the folk-singer attaches far more importance to the words of his song than to its tune; that while he is conscious of the words that he is singing, he is more or less unconscious of the melody. *I have come across many peasant singers who were unable to recognise a tune, or at any rate to distinguish one tune from another.*" In fact, if you sing a song to the peasant and ask him if that is how *he* sings it, he will say that it is; yet when he in turn sings it his version is notably different from yours without his being at all conscious that this is so. "In nine cases out of ten," says Mr. Sharp, "his version will prove to be quite different from that which you just now sang to him, and which he had assured you was the same as his....I have never met with a singer who could detect small melodic differences. So long as your tune is, in the main, similar to his, *the most musical* of folk-singers will declare it to be identical, *although the difference may be of considerable importance from a musician's point of view, e.g., a change of mode, or a variation in rhythm.*" And he

gives us a charming picture of a number of men in a village inn singing in unison the chorus—or what they took to be the chorus—of 'Brennan on the Moor.' "They all agreed with regard to the words of the refrain, but many of them sang different versions of the air, no one, as far as I could see, making any attempt to adapt his own particular version to that of his neighbour. I believe that they were one and all quite oblivious of the cacophony they were producing, which grew worse rather than better as the song proceeded." And Mr. Sharp gives us the music of two versions of the same song—'Salisbury Plain'—which were taken down from the same singer's lips at different times. The two are so completely different, in melody and rhythm, that many people would have difficulty in believing that even the most ignorant singer could imagine them to be the same. Mr. Sharp further notes that "singers will often sing the first verse of a song to the whole tune, and then for the remaining verses repeat over and over again the second half only of the melody. Whenever this has happened to me I have questioned the singer and tried to discover whether or no he was conscious of his maltreatment of the tune. I have always come to the conclusion that he was not." Mr. Sharp, gallantly determined to put the best face possible on the case, opines that all these variations have a peculiar artistic virtue, in that they "apparently spring spontaneously from out the heart of the singer." Most people would say that they sprang from sheer musical incompetence. We have only, as I have remarked, to imagine our system of notation to be lost, and all our present store of music to be transmitted orally—or to suppose a similar process to happen in connection with poetry—to see that the chances are immeasurably in favour of a good tune being spoiled rather than improved—unless you are going to suppose that the random shots of a lot of unmusical peasants are more likely to lead to perfection of feeling and of form than the similar shots of the same number of townspeople to-day. If this is the way the "community" has "made" the folk-song, the process has probably been one of successive soilings of whatever fairness the original image may have had. Mr. Sharp, indeed, partly gives away his own case when he tells us that it is only an exceptionally gifted folk-singer here and there that can vary a song *inventively* and improve it. "Singers like Mrs. Overd and Mr. Henry Larcombe

belong to those who aid very materially the evolution of the folk-song. The variations of the ordinary singer are comparatively trivial....But those given in the above examples [*i.e.*, by Mrs. Overd and Mr. Larcombe] are more than mere changes of detail ; they amount to the invention of new phrases. *Probably* every generation has produced *a small percentage* like Mr. Larcombe or Mrs. Overd, and to *their especial gifts* must be attributed many of those musical qualities which are the glory of the folk-song." But if this theory be true, what becomes of the theory that " the community " has made the song ? If Brahms writes a melody, and Mr. Kreisler and Mr. Ysaye and a few more first-rate violinists vary it to suit themselves, who would say that " the community " had created or evolved the final form of the tune ? The folk-song partisans would no doubt reply that " the communal sense " adopted it for its own, and so set its seal upon it, certificated it as the very outpouring of the soul of the race. But if that be so, then " the community " must equally be regarded as the part creator of a song by Schubert or Schumann, for it has decided that under no circumstances could it imagine this being improved upon.

There are other rocks in the course of the frail bark of the folk-theory argument. Why, to begin with, should we assume this fundamental rightness in the thinking of the untutored peasant of the past ? Mr. Sharp's theory is that " folk " music is more " genuine " than " art " music. " The unconscious output of the human mind, whatever else it may be, is always real and sincere. A man in his involuntary actions and unconsidered utterances must of necessity expose his real nature [it does not at all follow that his " real nature " is worth exposing or expressing] ; whereas those things which he does and says of set intention may or may not be sincere, and may or may not, therefore, reflect his true character. The music of the common people must always, therefore, be genuine and true, for instinct is their only guide and the desire of self-expression their only motive. [Pushed to its logical conclusion this would make out the nocturnal cry of the amorous cat to be more " genuine " than the love-music of ' Tristan.'] With art-music this is not always so. The art-musician practises his art of intention. He has expended time and thought upon his training. He is a specialist, and music is his trade. Consequently he is

tempted, when the inspiration is not upon him, to make music for the sake of making it, to turn it out mechanically, to use his head and not his heart, to divorce feeling from expression. The folk-musician, on the other hand, working unconsciously and guided alone by the light of nature, is under no such temptation. He practises his art only when feeling and the desire of expression compel his utterance." This is just a revival of the eighteenth-century theory of the divine rightness of the noble savage and the corruption of civilisation. Mr. Sharp does not perceive that the technique of an art is not a substitute for inspiration—in the case, of course, of a man who is born with something to say—but a clearing away of obstacles from the path of the expression of the idea. On his line of reasoning the unsophisticated peasant ought to be a better actor than Salvini or Coquelin, who practised their art "of intention." Mr. Sharp thinks that "folk-music is the ungarbled and ingenuous expression of the human mind, and on that account it must reflect the essential and basic qualities of the human mind." The peasant's language may be supposed to do the same thing; but is Shakespeare or Swinburne therefore to speak no swifter and subtler tongue than this? So far as *any* qualities of the human mind are really "essential and basic" we may be sure that they cannot be kept out of even the most modern art. What Mr. Sharp means by essential and basic are merely certain qualities of simplicity that have been bred in men who have happened to live in a simple environment. But what special virtue there can be for us more complex beings in these qualities it would baffle any but a folk-song enthusiast to affirm. A good folk-song's only claim to respect is not that it is a folk-song, but that it is good.

Moreover, how can we be sure that any folk-song that is supposed to express the spirit of a given "community" is really the product of that community? Mr. Sharp contends that "the tune-variations which appeal to the community will be perpetuated as against those which attract the individual only." This leads him to embark upon one of those facile pseudo-distinctions that we so often meet with in discussions of race. Music, it seems, may be "an appeal to the sense of beauty, *i.e.*, æsthetic in character; or it may be an appeal to the understanding, *i.e.*, expressive in character"—a piece

of thoroughly crude psychologising to begin with. "Which of these will be the determining factor in selection will depend ultimately upon *the racial characteristics* of the community. The Celt will, in all probability, be attracted by those variations which are primarily sensuous, and which satisfy his somewhat ornate feeling for beauty; whilst in the case of the Anglo-Saxon those variations which make for self-expression will be given the preference." One need hardly comment upon this that "the Celt's" supposed "ornate feeling for beauty" must be just as much self-expression — *his* self-expression — as anything "the Saxon" may turn out, or that the theory that Celts are sensuous and Anglo-Saxons are not would make Pascal an Anglo-Saxon and Swinburne a Celt. It is more interesting to note Mr. Sharp's next remark—that "the tunes I have recovered in West Somerset, where the people, to judge by their speech, are partly Celtic, are certainly smoother and more polished than those that I have gathered in East and Mid-Somerset [if smoothness and polish, by the way, are the criteria of Celtic sensuousness, then the supreme Celt of England would be a poet like Tennyson.] A rugged and forceful tune [Shall we say the 'Marseillaise'?] seems to me to typify the Anglo-Saxon, one in whom the need for self-expression is the dominant feeling." That is to say, two racial types exist in this one English county—as has been noted, indeed, by other observers in other counties. How then can we be sure that what now passes for an "Anglo-Saxon" tune was not composed by a Celt, and vice versa? How many tunes may not have been brought overseas by sailors, travellers, or captives? It will not do to say that their characteristics reveal their origin,—that a "sensuous" tune is this and a "rugged" tune that, in Mr. Sharp's manner. That is altogether too fanciful and superficial. We know that patient research proves the foreign *provenance* of many a melody that has always been accepted as unquestionably "national." Mr. Frank Kidson has recently made merry play with the Welsh nationalists, showing that certain so-called old Welsh tunes are English. Manx folk-music contains many songs that are undoubtedly Irish and English in origin. Many a "German" tune has been born in France or Italy. We know, for example, that the chorale "In dir ist Freude" was one of the 'Balletti' of Giovanni Gastoldi (1591); the chorale "Was mein Gott

will, das g'scheh allzeit"—which Bach uses in the 'St. Matthew Passion'—was originally a French love-song; the chorale "Durch Adams Fall ist ganz verderbt" was originally a soldiers' song at the battle of Pavia; the chorale "Wenn wir in höchsten Noten sind," which is inseparably associated with Bach, came, like several others, from the Huguenot psalter, being probably an adaptation of a French folk-song. There is not one of these melodies that would not have been accepted as a typical product of "the German mind" until historical research proved their true origin. In an article entitled 'Ein Kapital vergleichender Musikwissenschaft,' in the first volume of the 'Sammelbände der Internationalen Musikgesellschaft,' Oskar Fleischer gives a series of musical examples showing that the same folk-song is found among the southern Slavs, in Austria, in north Germany, in Italy, and elsewhere. The well-known Neapolitan 'Santa Lucia' is found distributed in the same way over half Europe. The melody of the mediæval hymn 'Conditor alme siderum' is recognisable in folk-songs in Flanders, Brabant, Norway, Thuringia, Brittany, Dunkirk, Poland, Lithuania, Sweden, Saxony, Swabia, Switzerland, Luxemburg, Austria, the Pyrenees, and elsewhere. Who can say in which country it had its birth? If it be answered that in all these cases this "community" or that adopts the alien air because it is in accordance with its own "national" spirit, the whole case of the folk-song advocate is gone. To admit that a foreigner may write our folk-songs for us is to cut the ground from under the feet of the theory that only from a supposedly "English" treasury of folk-song can the material be drawn for the foundation of an "English school of music."

Is not, in fact, all this talk of "national" music a little wild? *Is* there such a thing as "the" Englishman, "the" German, or "the" Frenchman? It is a form of language, it is true, that we all use at times, but merely by way of a kind of shorthand, a swift generalisation that can do little harm so long as we remember that it is no more than that. We may lump together the physical points in which Chinamen usually differ from Englishmen,—the nose, the cheek-bones, the complexion, and so on—and thus obtain a sort of composite image of a number of Chinamen, and oppose it to a composite image of a number of Englishmen obtained in the same way. On these lines

we might safely speak, for purposes of broad comparison, of "the" Chinaman and "the" Englishman. But even in the case of two races so widely different in many respects as these, there would be many Englishmen who looked more like Chinamen than certain un-Chinese-looking Chinamen, and vice versa; that is to say, the supposed fixity of type within a given territory is a myth, there being all possible variations of it observable when we study it in detail. Still less can we predicate any such fixity of type among the nations of Western Europe, or such starkness of type-contrast between one nation as a whole and another nation as a whole as is involved in the theory that "the" Celt is always this, and "the" Teuton always that, and "the" Latin invariably the other. We have only to look within our own borders, or at our own artistic and literary history, to see that the so-called English race puts forth specimens of every mental and moral type—stable and unstable, ascetic and voluptuous, intellectual and sensuous, reckless and careful, extravagant and precise—that could be raked together from all the countries on earth. "The" Englishman is a fiction. And when we speak of other nations as capable of being summed up under a single formula of this kind, it is only because we have not sufficient acquaintance with them to see them in detail. Were it not so we should not commit the gross error of speaking of "*the* Russian school of music," as if that vast empire, with its multiplicity of languages and of human types, had but one mind and one purpose. As Melchior de Vogüé once pointed out, we can never see an unfamiliar land in such detail as a familiar one; a Russian landscape has a uniformity of outline and of tint for the Western eye that it never has for the eye of a Russian. Europeans think Japanese art monotonous; the Japanese say the same of ours. Humboldt said that at first all South American natives seemed to European eyes to be similarly featured; it was only afterwards that differences of physiognomy were observed. And every one knows that all the faces of a flock of sheep look alike to the townsman, though not to the shepherd. The theory that even in a simple community—to say nothing of complex communities like ours—there is any one type of mind or body that can claim to be "the" national type is absurd. "Ranke," says Mr. John M. Robertson in his elaborate study *The Saxon and the Celt*, "used to be often cited as the typical

German historian....Well, Ranke was a little dark man with bright black eyes, answering somewhat closely to that type of Ligurian or Aquitanian which is at times specified as the fundamental element in the so-called Celtic peoples—a type as far as possible from that of the traditional Teuton." Nelson, so the new *Encyclopædia Britannica* tells us, was not at all typical of the English of his epoch; while M. Romain Rolland says of César Franck, the pure Belgian, that "there is no mind more completely French than his."

If the Bismarck build, with its physical massiveness, its heavy, square jaw, is to be taken as "typical" of the German, what are we to make of the gaunt and lanky and nervous Richard Strauss? To see the full absurdity of these attempts to reduce complex nations to a single formula we have only to read some of the generalisations of foreign writers about ourselves. M. Augustin Filon, for example, gravely told his French readers the other day that Mr. G. K. Chesterton is "one of the writers who best express the British soul"—which must be unfair either to the British soul or to Mr. Chesterton. There is, indeed no end to the ridicule that could be poured upon these facile and foolish generalisations.

And if there is no such thing as "the" English spirit, how can our folk-songs ever have expressed it, or how can we express it now, by the help of the folk-song or without it? Will the enthusiasts explain how, in the days before easy communication tended to obliterate by mixture the differences between the inhabitants of the various parts of the country, any song of one district *could* be said to be a summary of the soul of another district or of the country as a whole? The differences between a Dorsetshire peasant and a North-countryman are marked enough even now; what must they have been centuries ago? How can any of these old songs claim the universality it is attempted to ascribe to them? And as there is no such thing as "the" Englishman to-day—only Englishmen of the most diverse physical and mental types, passions, appetites, ideas—how can any one composer hope to express the "national" mind in music? Suppose a composer never to have heard a folk-song in his life, how much worse off would he be? The enthusiasts who assert that there is some peculiar efficacy in the folk-song should be able to tell us precisely how its virtues act. Would the music of 'Gerontius' have been any the better

if Elgar had known all the folk-songs of England, or any the worse it he had never known one of them? What light upon the problem of Gerontius's soul, dazed and shaken at the thought of death, can be thrown by 'Tarry Trowsers' or 'I'm seventeen come Sunday,' or 'Mowing the Barley'? Are we not, in fact, sentimentally idealising our ancestors in the lump when we suppose that their artless outpourings can have, in the majority of cases, any but an antiquarian interest for us of to-day? To the enthusiastic collector every goose among the folk-songs,—nay, every waddling duck—is a glorious swan. To the less deluded student a vast number of folk-songs are obviously the commonplace things that might be expected from the village "chawbacons" who conceived them; while to the good tunes is due the same respect as —but no more than—we accord to anything in this world that is good of its kind. A modern English composer can have no more to learn from English folk-songs than from those of Germany or Hungary or Scandinavia, and no more to learn from the whole of them together than from Palestrina and Bach and Wagner and Strauss. He will write great music only if he assimilates life generously; and if he expresses profoundly and beautifully what all of us feel *qua* human beings he will necessarily express what we feel *qua* German or French or English human beings. The truly great artists are citizens of the world. It is only the little ones who cannot see, or do not want to see, beyond their parish, their province, or even their country.

Poetry and the Modern Novel.*

By Compton Mackenzie.

It is a very remarkable fact that, even at this stage of æsthetic accuracy, we are still unable to define to everybody's satisfaction the most vital element of Art. We are tolerably sure what is and is not Music; we have no hesitation, even in Sackville Street, in recognizing what is and is not Painting. Sculpture, Dancing, and Architecture present no problems in their definition; but Poetry, escaping from the pigeon-holes of fixed denomination like the creature of fire and air it is, eternally eludes us. No doubt differences of language are partly to blame. Poetry alone of the arts lacks a universally recognized outward sign of its spiritual existence; and, like certain wines, it is very impatient of translation. Colour is the same for us as it was for Venice four hundred years ago. The symphonies of Beethoven sound with equal majesty in London and Berlin. Praxiteles and Rodin wrought their monuments from similar material. But Heine may be unintelligible where Herrick enchants the listener; and so widely do not merely the tongues of mankind but also the national standards of beautiful language vary, that the application of any test of words alone is almost useless. In England we have poetic words and unpoetic words, and for this reason, perhaps, English poetry is more readily recognized than any other nation's. For this reason, too, perhaps we have in England the best of the world's poetry and a good deal of the worst: ambidexterity does not help a language when ostentatiousness reveals its weakness. In France, where poetry has always suffered from an over-elaboration of pure technique and a devotion to barren forms, genius is often dissected like a jigsaw and put together by a tenth muse called Ingenuity. How much of French poetry is Rhetoric curbed by the reins of metre.

I wonder whether comparisons apply to poetry—that is, whether we actually have any justification for speaking of good and bad poetry, as I myself did a moment ago.

* The substance of this paper was given as an address to the Poets' Club on March 28th, 1912.

Surely the only antithesis to poetry is not-poetry; and is prose necessarily not-poetry? It might be safer to contrast prose with verse. I do not believe that poetry is discoverable in externals, and, incidentally, I would like to take this opportunity to reprobate very strongly the barbarous phrase "poetical prose." I confess I scarcely know what it can mean. If it be intended to describe prose infused with the spirit of poetry, it would surely never have acquired the odium that is attached to it. If it mean prose mimicking the regular stresses and rhythms and assonances of verse, it can surely only be called prose by the courtesy or avarice of the printer. But I believe that "poetical prose" is generally used to signify prose in a condition of hysterical excitement, language in an epilepsy: so why the meaning of poetical should be disgracefully debased it is difficult to imagine.

In primitive times all the noblest actions and emotions of humanity were expressed in metrical forms for the reason that, recitation being the medium of distribution, it was necessary to make an obviously rhythmical appeal. Moreover, superficially, it is easier to write verse than prose: the less exhausting intervals are a great aid to the expression of simple ideas. It is worth noting, too, that with the growth of complications moral, mental, eugenic, rational, which has been called civilization, verse has been more and more completely puzzled to hold its own with prose. Now to argue that this is bad is to argue that progress is bad. No doubt the proposition is defensible; but it lies outside our province, and I am only anxious to persuade you that, though verse is perhaps no longer the dominant æsthetic influence on our period, it by no means follows that the supremacy enjoyed since the beginning of Art by Poetry is in any danger of destruction. I wonder if I can make my meaning clearer by analogies from other arts. I should be tempted to say that the earlier composers like Bach wrote in verse; that Beethoven wrote sometimes in prose, but mostly in verse; that Schumann wrote sometimes in verse, but mostly in prose; that Wagner wrote, and Strauss writes, entirely in prose. Again, Rodin is a prose sculptor; Turner and Whistler are prose painters.

And if you feel that these analogies are too fantastic, let me remind you of certain phases in the history of English literature.

After the dramatic outburst of the Elizabethans, that reflected in poetic drama the suddenly heightened action of contemporary politics, an age of comparatively degenerate verse succeeded, from which emerged the solitary figure of Milton, that great eclectic and decadent. Contemporary with him was the greatest age of English prose which, learning from the Authorized Version new and stupendous harmonies, contained the real poetry of the time. During the eighteenth century verse fell farther and farther away from poetry, and was content with the insignificant treatment of important subjects, as in Pope's 'Essay on Man,' or with the elaboration of unimportant subjects, as in the same poet's 'Rape of the Lock.' And where was poetry hiding? I confess the Muses were in strange company; for Calliope was riding pillion behind Henry Fielding, and Melpomene was gossiping over a counter with Samuel Richardson. The Romantic revival flamed up in a profusion of glorious verse, and with the renewed worship of the past, with all the best inspiration of poetry going into verse, prose stood still, stifled by the rhetoric of chattering statesmen all agog with the French Revolution and the rise of Bonaparte.

At this point I am inclined to hazard a generalization, and say that prose nearly always occupies itself with the reflection of the present. The past presents itself for us mostly in patterns, and verse is better able to take advantage of patterns than prose, which always achieves its own design with greater labour and less consciousness of it in the making. I believe that Browning wrote in verse primarily on account of the manifest rhythm of the past.

You are, no doubt, perfectly aware by this time that I cannot identify poetry with verse, and you have possibly remarked how many fences I have tried to leap to avoid a plain definition. Poetry, for me, is the quintessence of life displayed and preserved in a reliquary of beautiful words; and for the purposes of this definition I will say that life consists of action, emotion and thought, together with their corollaries of experience, tranquillity and contemplation, against a background of divine and human beauty. To me great poetry seems to happen when a perfection of utterance or expression completely coincides with the capacity for experience, the sense of tranquillity and the power of contemplation.

Now you will not, I hope, deny that prose may contain all these. The predominance of action will give drama; the exaltation of emotion will produce lyric poetry; the battles of thought may effect a philosophy. I am not going to claim for the novel a likely supremacy in any one of these conditions. It would not be fair to expect for a guinea the right to change as often as you like works that combine *Macbeth*, the *Ode to a Skylark*, and the *Phædo*. But I do ask that the modern novel may be free to utilise all these, and, furthermore, that the novelist's complete works, bound exquisitely in the *édition definitive*, may one day confront their creator as his epical contribution to the poetry of his time.

I do not believe that the epic, as written for the last time by Milton, possesses any chance of revival in the traditional form. The complexity of modern life has made it inconceivable; for the epic was invented to record splendidly splendid deeds and simple thoughts. Sincerity is necessary to all art; but an epic *is* sincerity. The original epics were produced casually, almost as after-dinner speakers would persuade us that they produce their speeches. The later epics were begotten by belief in an idea, by the obsession of an overwhelming reality. Such was the *Divina Commedia*. Such was *Paradise Lost*. What idea or reality have we now in this empirical age? There is one only—Man. And I would ask you to believe that no twelve books of great blank verse will suffice to sing the epic of democracy.

Our contemporary epic is the united output of fiction. We plant more and more saplings every year, but few survive August drought or Christmas frost; and such trees as we leave behind will depend for their growth on the forestry of the future. The English novel has always leaned towards the epic, and was invented just as casually. I do not believe it marked a continuation of that steady growth which, beginning with Milesian tales, developed through Petronius and Apuleius and Boccaccio, and had reached already its culmination with Cervantes. The foundations of the English novel seem to me to rest on a far less obvious basis than the *conte*, and to represent a revolt against the Georgian devotion to compartments. In the eighteenth century Literature and Politics, Morality, Religion and Society, all had to show a greatest common factor of common sense. Poetry does not flourish in

periods when mankind is engaged in auditing his history and, as it were, putting an extravagantly managed business on a sound commercial footing. This craze for arrangement was bound to set the world off again, when the leisurely recuperation from the effects of two stormy centuries began to manifest itself in a certain boisterousness of too good health. The poetry of *Tom Jones* is mostly to be found in its profound vitality and passionately normal humanity. After kings and institutions, after new worlds and new religions, it seemed suddenly to strike Fielding as worth while to write of the ultimate cause of all the surging change, the ordinary man's ordinary actions. Almost at the same time Richardson thought it worth while to write of the ordinary woman. *Tom Jones* has often enough been called an epic. The parallel is plain enough to establish a platitude. But *Clarissa Harlowe*, perhaps because of its awkward epistolary form, has never seemed to justify any comparison with the epic. Yet the 'soul with all its maladies,' the strife of character, the subservience of action to motive, the reality of the protagonists, the pageant of domestic life, indicated to posterity a potential development of the novel which all the spacious sanity of Fielding never promised. His is the poetry of Shakespeare's comedy, of green England, of simplicity and grossness and normality; but Clarissa claims comparison with Hamlet, and hers is the poetry of the human soul. I wish I had space to examine the long list of successors to Fielding and Richardson, to show you how, in my opinion, the immortality of any novelist depends almost entirely on his poetry. I will refer instead to a brilliant exposition of the theory of ecstasy in literature, to Mr. Arthur Machen's *Hieroglyphics*. You will find there much to dissent from, but you will also find much more to endorse and many lines of critical development finely indicated.

I am inclined to say that Balzac really gave us the form of the modern novel. If Fielding was the Homer, he was the Dante. He wrote in a frenzy of creation. He deliberately and consciously imagined an epic, and in his *Comédie Humaine* directly challenged comparison with the Florentine. Balzac was more essentially poetic than his predecessors. He was not merely content with the mystery of psychology and the glories of action, he perceived also the significance of names—you remember Z. Marcas—and

of streets and the enchantment of great cities. He was aware of the massed opinion which makes a movement. He discerned the great in the small; the small in the great. He wrote his epic amid the débris of the French Revolution, a débris which had been hastily covered over with the tawdry counterpane of the Second Empire.

We are faced with somewhat similar conditions. Not even Balzac was confronted by such an accumulation of raw material. The great Victorian novelists smiled tranquilly down on the industrial welter of their time and, shining with the reflected sunset of the Romantic revival, continued with few exceptions along the lines of the Georgian tradition. The raw material went on accumulating; it was dismissed from the consideration of artists as ugly: but unless the novelist of to-day tries to extract the poetry from it, this accumulation will be apt to swamp art, as indeed was once very nearly the case. The novel probably originated in a desire to balance the claims of the heroic with the admission of the commonplace through the medium of contemporary manners. This desire, at any rate, served the purpose of the two centuries that preceded our own. The claims of the heroic were still sufficiently perceptible in the conspicuousness of individual life. But gradually, as with less dexterous hands unreality enveloped the heroic and sentiment clouded the commonplace, the novel betrayed signs of expiring from inanition. It is not so easy for our present novelists to protect the claims of the heroic as many critics would have them believe. The novelist of to-day, if he be sincere and of a wide vision, has to deal with huge masses of conjoined individualities, with the personality of mobs and movements, with the appalling inhumanity of human aggregations. Unquestionably Balzac tried to grapple with this problem of art when he sought to classify mankind in types and to partition society into organic groups.

There is a widely diffused and frequently voiced grievance that to-day we have no great men. To a certain extent the Victorians ensured their greatness by their want of sympathy. This is not a paradox. They always remained serene; they were never feverish. But then they had nothing much to excite them, except Free Trade and Popular Education and an Extended Franchise—academic reforms to them: to us vital problems. Balzac alive—and how much alive!—between the Revolution and the

Commune, the most feverish personality of a feverish epoch, was never a professional great man like so many of his English contemporaries. I am not trying to sneer at the Victorians—they were always glorious artists: but Thackeray was not a poet; George Eliot was not a poet; Dickens and Meredith ceased to be poets. They were, indeed, great novelists; but they were so great that they have made it almost impossible for modern novelists to recover from the responsibility of their greatness. I shall make myself clearer when I say that for me Thomas Hardy is the greatest of them all, for Thomas Hardy gave the present something to work on, to develop. He is a poet, a very great poet, and for that reason he may be called a productive genius.

Consider now the poetry of what to most of the Victorians was either rhetoric or logic. Consider the stress of our period with the rush of education, the multiplicity of newspapers, the increasing publicity, the helter-skelter criticism, the swift veering of popular ideals, the racking fatigue, and all the ills of democracy many times magnified beyond the gloom of the great pessimists of the past, flung at our heads together with virtues and triumphs undreamed of before they were beheld. When you think that Mrs. Browning was so much overcome by her first sight of Paddington Station that she took to her bed for some days to recover from it, it is not surprising that the writers of the present have not yet secured a foothold, that they still seem to evade their opportunities, that they appear to hesitate, that artistic experiments are manifold. Yet they are all searching for one thing—the poetry of it all; and by the poetry of the present will the novel survive. If Life and Art were really as easy as they appear after reading *The Spectator*, no doubt the sensitive critic would be spared the unpleasantness of many harsh experiments. Nevertheless, these experiments are signs of vitality.

Mr. Kipling was the first of the moderns to formulate his ideals. He turned with disgust from the ineffective Liberalism that fell to pieces in 1892, and tried to balance the claims of the heroic Imperialist with the admission of the commonplace soldier. He flashed his prose like a heliograph to the ends of the earth, and in a few weeks all that he had helped to build up crumbled in the disaster and disillusionment of the Boer War. Since then he has claimed for the present nothing heroic. His conception

was rooted in poetry, but not so deeply as to reach that subsoil which was so soon to come to the surface and kill with rankness the flowers of Imperialism. This subsoil must be made fertile by the poets of to-day. It must be worked and dug and cultivated experimentally, so that soon, if not in our generation, the rankness will be sweet and fit for flowers. And poetry is showing signs that no longer is it content to chirp in a golden cage of romance, no longer is it afraid to trail what pinions are left in the mud of reality. The legend of public indifference to verse is slowly being disproved, and soon, we may trust, our poets will not mope silent for evermore after the striking of a few soft and melancholy chords. But poetry does not depend on verse. This must inevitably be primarily an age of prose, because, as I said before, prose labours more heavily to beget itself: and this raw age can scarcely yet be conscious of its own patterns and rhythms. Poetry, in its purest form, poetry in verse, will doubtless be written by men unborn who, regarding from a more tranquil future the travail of the present, will weave immortally its pattern. Soon action must be heightened, and drama will burst forth to accompany appropriately the characteristic of that period. Days of swift action will need nights of drama, the intensification of poetic action. Possibly our contemporary lyrical poets are culpable for the neglect of verse. They are, perhaps, more numerous and more generally accomplished than ever before, but they lack that singing note which is born from triumph and achievement, as when a skylark sings loudest at his topmost altitude. We should look to the lyric, if not for triumph, at least for aspiration in its purest expression: too much of our lyric poetry is a sad complaint. This age has not yet been proved a failure; and if sometimes one is overwhelmed by the contemplation of fled glories, how encouraging is it to stand on the steps of the Albert Memorial, glad to give the Victorians all they had in an almost Pharisaic self-congratulation.

After all, if there are greater difficulties for the contemporary artist to surmount, there is more material to inspire him. I question, to be content with a trivial example, whether the Tube is not almost the finest adventure of travel which the world has known. For me, certainly, every journey is an Odyssey from the moment I enter the lift, with its subtle variations of mood—the sub-

dued gaiety of expectation about half-past seven in contrast with the lassitude of the afternoon—the personalities of the liftmen, and the curious intimacy and relaxation of by-laws late at night. There is the waiting on the tempestuous platform, the Cyclopean eye of the advancing train, the adventure of boarding, the fastidiousness in the choice of a neighbour, the sense of equality, the mysterious and flattering reflection of oneself in the opposite windows, and even the colours of the various stations—from the orange and lemon of Covent Garden to the bistre melancholy of Caledonian Road, or Camden Town faintly cerulean like an autumnal sky. Surely the poetic novelist should never be called upon to defend his instinct for decoration when the stark realities are so full of suggestive colour.

But, indeed, the external poetry of the modern novel suffers still from an imputation of bastardy. Many critics view decorative prose in the same way as certain mistresses observe the feathered hat of the parlour-maid *en fête* and free. For many critics realism has certain epithets which stick fast as burrs. It must always be grey and sordid and depressing; sometimes, under the excitement of a larger vocabulary, it is also mean and squalid. One is inclined to think that truth is made to depend on the opinion of a majority. For my part, I believe that "realism" is the substance or abstraction of a familiar theme or object treated justly—that is, without extravagance, but also without superficiality. Much modern realism is simply nominalism too easily content with what the unimaginative majority choose to call the familiar theme or object.

Perhaps I am laying too much stress on the externals of poetry: for it is not to be supposed that an eye for colour will make a novelist into a poet. I should be like the followers of Victor Hugo who, when some poet first read his verses to the critical circle, sat in silence until the newcomer came to the epithets "*jaune et bleu.*" Then they broke into loud applause and voted him a true poet. Mere "blue and yellow" does not make poetry. We must have that perfection of expression completely coinciding with the capacity for experience, the sense of tranquillity and the power of contemplation.

It may be worth while to apply the test of these four qualities to the modern novel. Sometimes I think that the first is the most generally neglected. I do feel that

we are too charitable towards bad writing, too ready to condone bad craftsmanship, if the matter be good. Beautiful words and the beautiful arrangement of words solidified by precision and judgment in their application must more than ever be emphatically demanded now. I do not believe one little bit in the value of undisciplined autobiography, of jejune self-revelation. At the moment we are far too ready, from a natural eagerness to appreciate the new elements in our society, from our excitement at reaping the first harvest of universal education, to overlook the absence of art and, adopting a miserable *cliché*, to say, "Here is life—a finer thing than literature." I wish that this detestable premiss whose only logical conclusion is the cinematograph in combination with the gramophone could be killed. *Ars longa, vita brevis* is a more admirable platitude. One is tired of these introspective muffin-men chaperoned by leading novelists, of these communicative peers vouched for by their publishers. If we disdain the craft of letters, the power of style, the austerity, the discipline, the merely academic routine, the heritage of great works of art that survived the little lives of their creators —if we disdain all these, we shall not find in any poet or novelist a quality that will compensate for their loss. Those twin spirits, beauty of language and beauty of form, must be eternally pursued. They will run often in contrary directions, but with the capture of one the pursuit of the other must be urged the faster. They are both necessary.

We come to the capacity for experience. That does not mean experience itself. A guide is not more trustworthy because he has fallen down a precipice; but if he has been aware of the possibility, and contemplated the result, he will be more trustworthy than the guide who has never observed the precipice until the occasion of his swift and final descent. It is wonder that gives the poet and the child capacity for experience. The poetic novelist will give this sense of wonder to his readers. He will teach them to be surprised by life through literature. The false realist and unpoetic novelist always truckles to the expected. He has no capacity for experience. He merely records the commonplace without heeding the claims of the heroic. The poetic novelist must not only give his readers wonder, he must at the same time preserve his sense of tranquillity. The fervid and lyrical presentation

of life in high moods will only be valuable in proportion to the degree of sanity in static moments. The poetic novelist will never relax his hold upon the normal, whatever fiery page of prose may seem for a moment to loosen his grip. Shakespeare meant more than dramatic contrast when the drums of Fortinbras were heard at the close of *Hamlet*. This sense of tranquillity is very necessary in an age of fever. The false realist will be infected by the turbulence and discontent and misery. The poetic novelist will perceive rather the dignity of the poor, will hear the inexorable and majestic tread of labour, and admire the nobility of endurance.

Lastly, for the poet remains the power of contemplation. Armed with this, he may survey not merely the world as from a mountain-top, but also his own work—the microcosm of his world, while the false realist regards himself in a mirror. I had almost said a newspaper.

I am convinced that the modern novel lives only by the poetry which gives it life. It is not enough to trace, however accurately, the contours of the surface. It is not enough to record a chronicle of facts. It is not enough to reflect in a work of art the observation of the commonplace mind of the majority. Truth is always beautiful, but truthfulness may be often very ugly. The realistic novelist might accurately see in the coal strike merely the misery of the unemployed, the gauntness of starvation, the dislocation of traffic, the obstinacy of the miners and the owners, the effectiveness or fatuity of Mr. Asquith. But another realistic novelist might imagine the muttering of Labour as it turns restlessly after centuries of dull sleep, and the force of Capital at bay. He might laugh at the vanities and follies of all statesmen, the ecstasies and lamentations of divergent opinions.

One might go on for ever illustrating the difference between the false realist and the poetic novelist, and at the end of it be no nearer the truth than Aristotle's dictum that Art should be universal. I find one always comes back to Aristotle. But the modern novel will achieve universality through poetry, for poetry is immortality in a radiance of words. Poetry is life itself, and as I make this assertion all my definitions seem to be melting in criticism; but I shall console myself with the reflection that poetry is ultimately undefinable; just as life is ultimately inexplicable.

Woman: a Reply to Man.

By Homunculus.

My qualifications for answering Miss Cicely Hamilton's 'Essay on Man' are small, I admit. I am nobody; a bachelor, merely a member of two social and three golf clubs—as you will see, just one of the crowd, Jack, my mother's son in short, and she bore my father three, and nursed us all herself. Yet it is of our average kind that Miss Hamilton writes. I do ask you, therefore, Mr. Editor, to publish my reply, and pray accept it for a pious offering: as my *obole* to the sex.

I agree with her. We do, I and all my male friends do, regard our sex as superior. I would almost go further and say as the fighting and important one. The earliest recollections point to that. My sisters invariably copied our games, our mannerisms, our vocabulary, our manners; and one of the first revelations of my life was when I was one day twisting Stella's arm for pinching my cake, and she said to me quite seriously: "You mustn't hurt me, Jack. You know, I'm only a girl." The remark struck me then as singularly profound. I thought about it privately a whole afternoon in the shrubbery. It gave me a new sense. I realised I was a boy, stronger, something different. From that hour I have always thought chivalrously of the sex. I have always regarded the male as the rougher and more vital animal.

And, again, I agree with Miss Hamilton that man does look upon woman as the production and expression of two elementary instincts—as she says, "the sexual and maternal." They are surely the two greatest and noblest instincts of life, and the one is the natural corollary of the other. Moreover, they are bi-sexual instincts, affinities, sympathies, desires—call them what you will, and the balance is held pretty evenly between them, since man proposes and woman disposes, as I know to my cost.

But the announcement "it is a boy" (I am told) has been ever dear to mothers, following the law of nature and the fittest, chiefly, I presume, because in a world of strife it is well to be the stronger and hardier. In agreement, then, with Miss Hamilton's two principal theses, I come now to her attitude.

Here, I confess, I am surprised. She writes of man with a note of acerbity. She appears to resent that man cherishes femininity in woman; that he says to her, "Don't try to obliterate the caste distinction between the sexes"; for why, she asks, does man dislike the woman whose characteristics resemble his, if not because he fears her encroachment upon his own aristocracy? The answer seems obvious. As woman dislikes and naturally resents the feminine male, so does man dislike and naturally resent the male woman. 'Twould be a trick of nature otherwise. In this, I hold, confusion of thought lies the weakness of Miss Hamilton's philosophy. Why, the fountain spring of life, and so of love, is this disparity in the sexes! "You women" is not a term of contempt (as Miss Hamilton asserts), but rather of danger, of pleasure. There are only two sexes—there is only one alternative. If men grow like women, women will not love them. If women grow like men, neither will men love women.

Now, for all that I am an ordinary man, I am not personally antagonistic to women possessing a vote, nor am I particularly desirous that they should. Suffrage feminism concerns me little. Woman, the sex, concerns me a great deal.

She interests and delights me æsthetically, because I find in woman almost all the qualities, virtues and delicacies that I miss in my own sex, so that I start with antithesis leading to mystery, revaluation, inspiration, and uncertainty; and I am interested naturally because life is a virile and creative gift, and man is a healthy animal. To me woman is an ideal. I fear me this sounds old-fashioned enough, yet it is none the less the truth. It began with my nurse, who seemed to me the embodiment of all human wisdom and amplitude. Then I learnt to love my mother. Next, the girl who played tennis with

my sister engrossed me. At College it was a fair girl with blue eyes. Later, it was a dark lady. You see, I have quite a gallery. But there has always been some one, and always each one has seemed to me wonderful, as far above me as the great white stars, and I know I am the better and the happier for it.

You ask me why? Hey, nonny, nonny!—because I love flowers, the green grass, the heavens, the mother earth. Because more than a superb picture, statue, or book, I have joy in the rhythm of life—the movement of spring, the song of summer, the fall of autumn; when the birds sing, when the blue shadows fall upon the hills, when the snow lies white upon the ground. And, again, because I like to feel the rain beating against my face, because I am happy when the wind blows the waves into mountains, when I listen to the silence of the night or the desert. These elemental things we can only see and marvel at. To me woman is the nearest reality we have to earth's rhapsodies For it is not the materialism ultimately that appeals to man; not the fruition, but the illusion of her that cries for expression, that raises and inspirits, that carries him into the ecstasy of existence — for somehow woman means that to man, though there are failures and shortcomings.

Quite so—a *coureur*, some may exclaim. I contend that issue is not relevant. The question is not whether man is constant or fickle, but whether he is *qua* man a lover. For that is the quintessence of life. Those men were lovers who put the women in the boats and went down with the Titanic. They did the noble, the beautiful thing. But a woman is always the beautiful thing: as girl, as beloved, as mother. It is her privilege, as the weaker vessel; her mystery, as the desired one; her strength in the office of motherhood. All the beauty of ages and civilisations has gathered about her, clothing her with the sanctity of a religion. She is the illusion of man, surviving all beliefs and traditions, the soul and body of our humanity.

I cannot believe you can pull down this idol of mankind with impunity. Man and woman may roughly be described as the give-and-take of life. If the higher sense of love

be giving, then it is women who give most—seeing that they are also the mothers of all of us—and men who take. Yet if that is so, no artificiality can alter it. White is white to all who are not colour-blind, and to man woman will remain woman. Whatever the changes, economic or public, introduced into her activities, woman must always be to man his antipode, for the epicene is the condition of sterility, and stagnation is the negation of all things. It may well be that in the march of civilisation woman has not developed civically proportionately with man, and that she has still much to remedy and redress, but of all the transient things upon this world the relationship between man and woman has remained immutable. Sekmet, goddess of Egypt, Cleopatra, "The Sunshine Girl"—the differences of drapery and a few bangles only! We fly our motor kites forsooth, but love has always flown in and out of the window, like joy or sorrow.

Well, I'm not going to be sentimental, though woman does represent to me the whole business of what is called love—and by love I mean all that is beautiful, young, simple, joyous, tender, gracious, kindly, merciful; and I would use other adjectives which you might think dreadfully conventional, such as pure and modest. A lot, I admit. Yet not too much, for I like a man to be strong and brave, clever, audacious, just, firm, a fighter and a thinker, full of purpose and truth and virility. I would wish my man to be to woman what an oak is to the primrose; and they are very different, as you may see any day now in the woods, and each is equally beautiful. I deny that man "despises" woman because she is weak, less educated, less solid in her idiosyncrasies. "So sweet the tear in woman's eye." No, no, we all love to kiss it dry. And it is just that little bond of sympathy which is the navel of our communion.

Why—and I ask with all deference—why this zeal of woman to imitate man? Miss Hamilton jibes at us because man is chivalrous only when woman is feminine, and much resents her striving for self-preservation along lines which are usually regarded as masculine? But, surely, don't all mothers tell their sons to be "men," to learn to take the blows and slings of fortune manfully, to be brave and loyal and true? And if this is the instinctive wish of mothers, what is there natural in the desire that women

should resemble men, either physically or mentally? I believe very sincerely in the reality of sex antagonism, and biologically it is quite fitting. The laws of attraction govern the universe, the greater attracting the lesser: so must it be with us. I cannot doubt it. The sea obeys the moon. If women at the altar decide no longer to obey us, what in the world can it matter? I would never wish the woman I love to obey me—she either would or she wouldn't.

Taking it all round, I rather lean towards the Suffragettes, because I would like to be able to read my Homer aloud to my sister in the long winter evenings; and I approve of working-women taking a conscientious share in public questions affecting their economy; and I would much like to feel that when a woman says No to a man, she means it irrevocably. That whole aspect of the question bothering traditional femininity just now is only part of the problem of our modern civilisation, which has begun to discover that a great many conventions have got to be shelved, causing a certain dislocation in the economy of our daily life. Miss Hamilton writes that her paper is an attempt to view man "with the eyes of an equal." That seems to me to botch the issue. We men never can look on women as equals. I venture to say that man and woman never can be mathematically equal, like the sides, say, of a triangle. We cannot even talk to women as we talk to men. Never do we think of them as equals because —because—I've got to say it, I know—because sex is a physical reality; because the affinity of the sexes must depend for very existence upon this disparity or polarity; because, in short, the frailest woman that a man loves is more to him than a whole legion of heroes, capitalists, artists, or good sportsmen put all in the scale together.

There are misogynists, I know. Age, temperament, health, various conditions affect us, but in the main, I think, my contention will hold: we men differ from women physically and mentally, and must always so continue. In the whole world of animal life there is this difference. I cannot see what possible disability or stigma there can be attaching to it. To be a fine man is good, to be a beautiful woman is wonderful. What virtue can there be

in equalisation of the extremes; what merit in the sex phenomenon of neutrality?

If I had a daughter, she should go to a University. I would have all the professors I could summon to teach her logic, philosophy, ethics, eugenics, science, astronomy. I would read Ricardo and Hobbes, Newman and Pater to her, the *Imitation* and *Don Quixote;* and I would have her taught dancing and music, fencing and dialectics; and she should attend any lecture, political meeting or assembly that she chose to; and if she had a vote I for one would rejoice. . I would not suffer her to neglect her hair though, her dress, *les petits soins*. I would say to her: "My child, have all the wisdom you can acquire; think, study, work, create, but know first of all that you are a woman."

"The greatest joy you can ever have is that of giving, which is the revelation of love. You may have to fight, to go out into the world and fend for yourself—all Frenchwomen, who are the most feminine of all women, work—you may have trouble and hours of great trial and disappointment, but the greatest thing you possess is yourself, your soul, your expression."

Let us have outspoken feminism by all means. I admit Miss Hamilton's contention that man is dogmatic, tyrannical, very narrow in all that applies to his wife and home, often dull, bald, boring, and unlovely. Alas! where is there systematic perfection? Women will open a great many doors yet, to be sure. There is the grille at Westminster. There is divorce. There is the vote. There are still heights to be scaled in all paths of production and creation, but no triumph of women, temporal or spiritual, will ever exceed her rapture in her own baby. For here we have an elemental truth, necessary like light. Any other condition is unnatural, unthinkable to us male creatures, for it is the premiss of all vitality. Nor can I believe that Miss Hamilton would dispute it.

Deep down in our manly hearts we like the "womanly woman"—the being, that is, that we feel so different from us, so frail, so gentle, so elliptic, so mysterious (shall I say?), so captious and contradictory. The fact is we men have conceived a type which has become an idol and an illusion.

It may be due to man's undoubted greater power of imagination, or to our more potent animal intensity, but there the idol lives for us, and really she is the only miracle left. Now women have raised no similar conception of man. No doubt we do not mean the same thing to them—we are the protectors, the fathers, the lovers. There is little illusion about us. Our hair falls off. Our waistcoats won't button up. Some of us grow dyspeptic, gouty, *journalier*, rusty. Ah me! still, a "man's a man for a' that." We have a code, a rough-hewn principle, of sex. "You know where you are with a man"—at least, a man does, though women, I know, say often the contrary. But a woman to us is what a ship is to a sailor—at least, so I have heard seafaring men say, and they are not bad judges either.

I have sometimes wondered what would happen to the sexes if, as the repercussion of modern feminism and women's "finding out" of man, we should adjust our estimate of women. Suppose that women acquired with the vote the concentration power, the strength, the stolidity of mind and action generally associated with the male, and that he attained to her instinct and intuition? The illusion of womanhood would fall. The Dollys and Doras would never "take us in" any more. There would be no longer any mystery, any uncertainty, any revelation. But would man or woman be the happier? I cannot think so. To me, women are the wings of life. I would never go behind the scenes of a theatre and see the paint on those I have admired so much on the stage. I love my illusion. I do not want the scales to fall from my eyes. I do not covet the exact wisdom—I, Homunculus, contemptible, but contented in my mediocrity. No, not for worlds do I care to know whether this hair is dyed or those eyebrows are pencilled; how those lines are fashioned, or why they are so fashioned at all. I like to look up into the night and wonder—I don't wish to be told the exact ascension or declension of Orion or Jupiter. What more beautiful than a field of waving poppies such as a man can see in Morocco—they don't inspire me to smoke opium. Nor, standing on the platform of Elsinore, do I require to read through *Hamlet*. Our illusions are the real jewels of this world, and not for any philosophy or fortune would I barter them, not even for the gift of the greatest of them all—the perfect knowledge of woman.

Pray do not regard me as a blatant specimen of my own sex, Miss Hamilton, if, with the most critical intentions I am capable of, I yet find so little to denigrate in yours. I try to picture an improved woman, a being more sweet and adorable than some women I have known, and for the life of me I cannot. Nature made in woman a most marvellous thing. It is, I think, this civilisation of ours, with its economic phenomena and exigencies that leads us to these morbid considerations of the individual and of sex, atrophying the normal animal instinct, since idea is to-day an incomparably greater power than force. Here, then, there is the condition and the means for woman's emancipation. In the days of physical force, obviously the rule went to the stronger. In these times a big mind is a better asset than a Sandow frame, as the inventors and airmen and others are showing. I would go even so far as to say this, that it is not that the sexes are equalising—there are physical laws governing mankind—but that the equations of things are equalising, not only with the sexes, but in all creeds and classes, castes and conditions—social, public and economic.

This would seem an age of leavening, of revaluation and adjustment, of socialisation: it is therefore a time of possibilities. The social layers and partitions of bygone days are crumbling down before the inroad of science and our modern cynicism, which is, of course, the natural credo of materialism. In an utterly material world woman assuredly has less to gain than man, seeing that she must always be the weaker physically, again proportionately as the idea of her etiolates from the ideal. For the more woman comes out of her mystery, so to speak, the lesser must become her power over men, because, when all is said and done, it is sex which distinguishes and dominates the sexes, and desire is the postulate of life. If a civilisation should ever arise where the sense of beauty became extinct, we may doubt whether man would survive. That is why woman incorporates in her being the three essentials of Christianity, which are faith, hope, and charity.

I take, therefore, in good part this exposure of our masculine "superiority," for in truth many of us are ugly and tiresome, and bullies too. All the same, this sex

recrimination seems to me both silly and pointless. Not by imitating man will women attain to the millennium, but in perfecting her own individuality, which, I thank my Maker, is so radically different from ours. And eugenically, too, this is so. I want women to take far more interest in public life than they do, to read more and shop less, to think more, do more, and help more.

Did I say love more? For that too is a need. Help us to reform, and make life happier and more beautiful. Teach us to be wiser—if you can. But do not copy our coarser skins and natures. There is a reason to all things. Remember, the heart is your reason. Leave us our butterflies and daffodils, the spring, our illusion, our blindness. You are the sacrament of life. Only, I beseech you, cherish—as men do their honour—that little filagree of femininity, which is the pivot of our common continuity.

THE WANDERERS.

We very much regret that we did not state in our March number that the story, *The Wanderers*, was a translation from the French. The circumstances in which it was submitted to us led us to believe that it was an entirely original work; but our attention has now been called to the fact that it is an exact (and we may add a remarkably able) translation of *Comédiens Ambulants*, a story in a volume called *Fumeurs d'Opium*, by Jules Boissière, originally published in Paris in 1896.

M. Jules Boissière was born at Clermont-l'Herault in 1863. He published two volumes of poems, *Devant l'Enigme* (1884) and *Provensa* (1887), which attracted much attention in Paris. Later he became Vice-Resident of France in Annam and Tonkin, and died at Hanoi in 1897. Two years later *Li Gabian*, a collection of Provençal poems with French translations by Madame Boissière, was published at Avignon. *Fumeurs d'Opium*, the original editions of which soon went out of print, has been recently reissued by the firm of Louis Michaud.

Our regret for the injustice we did to Madame Boissière in failing, through no fault of our own, to acknowledge the origin of *The Wanderers* is only mitigated by the fact that no translation, we believe, could have done better justice to the delicacy and colour of the original. Editor.

Protection and Public Health.*

By Sir Alfred Mond, Bart., M.P.

The question of the influence of protective duties on public health, using that word in the very widest sense, namely, public health from the point of view of public authorities, and from that of national health, is one that, so far as I am aware, has never been dealt with in any lecture. While investigating that very wide field, I have come upon many interesting statements and experiences of the effect of raising the cost of living on the health of the people in protected countries such as Germany, France, Italy, America, &c. It would be quite impossible for me to-night to endeavour to deal exhaustively with all the points. Thus a number of propositions must be accepted as axiomatic, since it would take too much time to go into any lengthy proof of several of them. To begin with, there is the proposition which can scarcely be disputed by any one who has studied the effect of protective duties wherever they exist, namely, that they raise prices. A certain school of Tariff Reformers who dwell in a land of their own creation argue that the existence of protective duties is a patent remedy for high prices and a method of reducing them to a lower level. Unfortunately, no method of supporting this heterodox view can be obtained from any country with a protective tariff, nor from any competent economist. It is, therefore, axiomatic to begin with, that the proposals in the way of Tariff Reform, imposing, as they do, duties on food and manufactured goods, must increase, and do increase, not only the price of imports, but also the domestic supply, both of foodstuffs and of other necessaries, such as clothing, boots, building material, and many other objects of common use which are essential to maintaining our population in a good state of health. With regard to the first proposition, I should like to refer you to an important paper written by an eminent German authority, Dr. Carl von Tyszka, and published by the Cobden Club in 1910. Dealing with the German corn tax, he states that: "In

* A lecture delivered at the National Liberal Club on March 18, 1912.

1885 the duty was raised to three marks per 100 kilograms, and in 1887 to five marks. The result was what might have been expected—an increase in the price of corn. It is true that Bismarck, replying in the Reichstag before the increase of the duty to certain Liberal members, declared that the increased tax would be paid by the foreigner." Thus this delusion, which still haunts the controversy on the subject, was a prophesy made as long ago as 1887 by Bismarck. "That the contrary was the case," continues Dr. von Tyszka, "was soon proved by experience. In reality, the whole amount of the duty was borne by the consumer, having been added to the price of wheat and bread. Before the increase of the corn duty in the 'eighties, the British and German prices were much about the same. In England in 1884, as a matter of fact, they were slightly higher—163*s.* 10*d.*, as against 162·20 marks in Berlin. After the introduction of the increased duty in 1887, the price of wheat in Berlin was higher than in England by nearly the total amount of the duty." And it has continued higher by that amount ever since, that is to say, about one-third higher. I will only give that one illustration, but it is an interesting one, as it shows that the prophets of Protection are equally inaccurate and equally sanguine in all countries, and are always disproved by facts.

Starting, then, with the proposition that the Tariff Reform system proposed in this country will raise the price of foodstuffs, and of other articles required for public health—you have two branches of the subject that particularly require consideration. The first of these is public health from the point of view of State and Municipal Services, in which is included the provision of institutions concerned with public health and charitable relief, such as workhouses, infirmaries, lunatic asylums, hospitals, &c., and, further, such public health works as drainage, sewage, sanitary schemes, &c., as well as housing, which must be looked upon as partly a public and partly a private service of health, since our municipalities and County Councils to-day have taken up housing on a large scale on what may be called public health grounds. Further, there are the salaries of the officials connected with all these institutions, the cost of maintenance, direct or indirect, of the people resident in them, and such further public burdens, for instance, as

the provision of meals for necessitous school children, which is also fundamentally a public health matter. I shall leave aside the controversial question whether a certain section of the industrial classes would be able to recompense themselves for the higher cost of living under a tariff by a rise of wages—a contention refuted by the experience of the workers in all protected countries. There can, however, be no question of any recoupment in the case of the non-productive services and work referred to. The increased expenditure would simply be an additional burden without any additional benefit. In Germany both the Imperial and State Governments and the Municipal Authorities have been obliged to make extra grants to their officials and employees expressly to meet the increased cost of living occasioned by the rise in prices due to the increase in the tariff of 1906. The Imperial Salary Law, which was passed in 1909, provided, for instance, no less a sum than £4,000,000 a year for that purpose, which sum grows until 1913, when it provides a total £5,000,000 for the Empire alone. In Prussia the law of 1907 demanded no less than £3,800,000. Municipal Budgets had to follow the example of State Budgets, which, of course, led to increased municipal taxation. These facts are recalled by our Consul-General, Sir Francis Oppenheimer, in his report. The effect of Protection on public bodies in Germany may be summarized as follows: that in November, 1911, in Germany, after general appeals to the Government to reduce food taxes, municipalities were forced to make money grants to their employees and to undertake the municipal sale of food. The Berlin Muncipality considered an increase of wages. Tramway employees received an increase of five per cent., and the others a supplement for the purpose of meeting the extra cost of food. Essen and Posen, for instance, granted £1,500 each for this purpose, and a big Leipzig bank gave its clerks half a month's salary extra.

A difficulty which hampers all our investigations is the great reluctance of our "Tariff Reform" friends to tell us exactly what they are going to do, and to explain the wonderful and mysterious measures which are to bestow upon us blessings which this country has never before enjoyed. The following figures, however, may help us a little. The total cost of indoor and outdoor relief and the maintenance of lunatics for 1909–10, according to an answer given by Mr. John Burns on March 5th,

1912, was £14,850,000. Lunatic asylums and lunatics not covered in the above (in 1908–9) cost £1,507,000, and hospitals other than Poor Law infirmaries and homes for inebriates came to £1,917,000, making a total of £18,274,000. Now, I estimate that the introduction of a Tariff such as has been proposed by Tariff Reformers in this country would raise the cost of maintenance of the people in these institutions somewhere between 7½ and 10 per cent. You would, therefore, on the latter figure, have the not inconsiderable increase of £1,800,000 on these services, which would have to come out of the rates, and for which you would certainly get nothing in return. Then, as to drainage, sewage, and services of that kind, they would, of course, be doubly affected, by the increased cost of labour and by that of material. If you increase the cost of living, the people engaged in such works as laying drains, sewers, and similar operations will either diminish their efficiency by under-feeding, and thereby increase the cost of labour, or you would have to raise their wages to keep them efficient. Then, as to the cost of material, for works of this character a very large number, if not, indeed, most of the items, would be affected either directly or indirectly by a Tariff schedule, with the result that the price would be increased from 7½ to 12½ per cent. If you take as an illustration the City of London, it is estimated for 1911–12 that the single item of laying drainage will cost no less than £295,420. Ten per cent. addition to that would mean an increased outlay of nearly £30,000 on one piece of municipal work in one city of the country.* If you add to that the other work for the promotion of public health going on all over the country, you will be able to realise what a heavy additional burden would be thus imposed upon the ratepayers.

There is another aspect of some importance which calls for careful consideration. We have recently passed a very important national insurance scheme, based on certain financial considerations, both as regards contributions and benefits. Now the benefits provided by the Insurance Act will all be diminished in value if you artificially increase the price of commodities. You are, therefore, face to face with the necessity either of diminishing the real benefits (apart from the money benefits) of your insurance scheme,

* The total expenditure of local authorities, apart from unapportioned loan charges, amounted in 1908–9 to £4,690,500, 10% on which sum would amount to nearly half a million sterling.

or of increasing the contributions. The same argument, of course, applies to Old Age Pensions. We have taken very serious responsibilities in connection with sanatoria and the treatment of tuberculosis. All our sanatorium treatment and benefits, and the finance of that part of the Act are based on our present fiscal system, and everything you do artificially to render more difficult either the adequate feeding, clothing, or housing of the population, is bound to react most unfavourably on this part of your national health scheme, thereby rendering its results infinitely less satisfactory, or else it will eventually compel you to raise much larger contributions in order to secure the objects in view.

It is important for all those engaged in municipal and County Council work and in social reform to realise that the proposals which are made by Protectionists, either to enhance artificially the price of food, or to raise the price of other commodities, have an aspect of very great importance for the ratepayers of this country, quite apart from their position as tax-payers and from their welfare as individuals.

The next part of the subject is the general effect of a protective system on the health of the private citizen, because in speaking of public health, I not only mean public health services, but the health of the public. It is obvious that the raising of the price of necessaries, and more especially of food, and to a large extent also of clothing, must lead either to a curtailment of consumption—in other words, to under-feeding and insufficient clothing—or to a resort to inferior and adulterated foodstuffs and other materials. Just as a debased coinage will drive out a better coinage, so also in foodstuffs and other necessaries you will find that if you raise prices too high, you will drive out the better article in favour of an inferior one. As a matter of fact, Germany to-day is giving us an extraordinarily interesting example of that law, in its artificially enhanced price of wheat, due to increasingly heavy duties, resulting in the substitution of the cheaper rye and still cheaper potato.

You find that in Germany to-day this substitution is affecting public health to an alarming extent, striking

instances of its deleterious effects being given by German publicists who have investigated the matter.*

I must content myself with giving for the moment some of the most important conclusions arrived at by one of these writers, Dr. Hans Kurella, a medical man, whose pamphlet on the effect of the Customs Duty upon the standard of living of the working classes throws much light on this subject. One of the results of his investigation is that the families who earn less than £54 15*s.* a year cannot provide themselves in Germany with sufficient nourishment to keep themselves efficient, and yet the members of such families number something like eight millions in the German Empire to-day. Of twenty-eight hand-weavers' families at Zittau, only four were (he says) adequately nourished; and only a twelfth part of the amount of meat was eaten which Voit regards (and which is regarded by medical physiologists) as absolutely essential. Dr. Kurella further states that medical science shows that certain diseases can only spread among ill-fed peoples, who are consequently less capable of resistance, while they rarely find favourable conditions for their development in a well-nourished body. A characteristic example is hunger-typhus (*Typhus recurrens*), which was endemic in Ireland. It broke out for the first time on the Continent in Upper Silesia in 1848. Its second visit to Prussia, in the spring of 1880, followed the beginning of the Bismarckian Protectionist era. Epidemics of hunger typhus begin almost always among those rendered less capable of resistance by insufficient nourishment. We might give our Tariff Reform friends a new headline, 'Tariff Reform means Hunger Typhus.' In dealing with consumption, he says that medical men no longer doubt that insufficient food is one of the main causes of its spread among the working-classes. England, he points out, furnishes an instructive example, consumption having declined here since the abolition of corn laws. Dr. Kurella gives the following interesting figures: the average deaths from consumption

* To those who are interested in the subject I can recommend very warmly an interesting publication which I have found invaluable. It is called *Der Neue Zolltarif und die Lebenshaltung des Arbeiters*, by Dr. Hans Kurella, published in Berlin in 1902. Then there are a couple of excellent books by Herr Emanuel Wurm, formerly member of the German Reichstag and a very able financial and economic writer, *Die Lebenshaltung der Deutschen Arbeiter*, &c. (Dresden, 1892), and *Die Finanzgeschichte des Deutschen Reiches* (Hamburg, 1910); Dr. Else Conrad's *Lebensführung von 22 Arbeiterfamilien Münchens* (Munich, 1909), an inquiry conducted at the instance of the Statistical Bureau of Munich; and M. Yves Guyot's well-known *Comédie Protectionniste.*

per 100,000 inhabitants in the years 1887–93 in England and Wales was 156·8, and in Prussia 274·7. In England and Wales, in 1894 to 1897, the figures were 135·8, and in Prussia for the same period 224·5. "Thus Prussia," he says, "is to-day (1902) far from having reached the point attained in England in 1880." As Herr Gebhard, Director of the Hanseatic Insurance Institute at Lübeck, declared at the International Tuberculosis Congress in Berlin, the only effective way of combating this disease among the people is by improving their position." In the investigations both into the mortality and the frequency of a disease such as tuberculosis, you can almost trace the increase in the price of food in Germany, showing how a Protective policy, driving people from wheat and meat to potatoes and lower grade foods, can greatly affect the public health of a nation. The consequent decline in the standard of living has, furthermore, a very serious effect on the finances of the German working-class insurance system, increasing numbers becoming entitled to infirmity pensions owing to the growth of under feeding and the consequent spread of tuberculosis.

According to Dr. Kurella, a very good instance of this causal connexion between Protection and disease comes from Italy. In that country there is a very considerable duty on wheat. And (he adds) as the Italians cannot substitute rye or potatoes, they are driven to resort to maize or Indian corn. The result of the substitution of Indian corn, which is a very poor food for a human being, has been a terrible skin disease called *pellagra*, which leads to paralysis, insanity, and suicide, and accounts for about 10 to 12 per cent of the total mortality of the country.* Now, if the Italian Government were to take

* The theory which attributes pellagra to the use of diseased maize has been universally accepted for over a generation, not only in Italy, Austria, and Hungary, the countries which perhaps suffer most from the disease, but throughout the world. Latterly, however, it has been seriously questioned by Dr. Louis Sambon of London, whose theory that pellagra is due to the sting of a minute blood-sucking fly of the genus simulium has been received with considerable favour by the medical world, although Dr. Sambon himself admits that he has not yet done the necessary experimental work "to actually and completely prove the agency of the simulium in the transmission of the disease." Indeed he goes farther, giving the result of the analysis of the blood of pellagra patients by another doctor who says that "no parasites of any kind whatsoever were noted" in it. Meanwhile the authorities in Italy, Austria, and Hungary have found by experience that a great improvement in the condition of pellagra patients has resulted from better nutrition in the form of wheat bread, &c. Thus, whether this disease is directly occasioned by the consumption of maize, as has been generally believed hitherto, or whether its immediate cause is the sting of an insect, the ultimate fact that the malnutrition of the Italian peasant is due to his being driven by protective duties to live to a large extent on maize still holds good.

off the wheat duty and allow the population to buy imported wheat, they could improve the public health at once, for we find that there is a very close parallel between the rise and fall of the number of deaths and of cases of insanity from pellagra with the rise and fall in the price of wheat.

These are by no means the only instances of injury to public health. There are many others, not the least important being its effect upon infantile mortality. The infantile mortality in Germany, according to Dr. Kurella, considerably increased in the years 1889–91, in which the full effect of the food taxes of the year 1887 gradually developed. The consequence was that the average mortality of sucklings in the years 1886–91 was less than that in the years 1877–81 in only two of the Prussian Government districts, while in every other district it was higher by more than 10 per cent. Although, of course, in some cases these figures may be exceptional, and in many instances may be affected by other factors, it is still an extraordinary fact that apparently there is a very real and distinct causal relation between the increase of food taxes and the increase of disease, infantile mortality, and even of crime and drunkenness.

I have already referred to the substitution of potatoes for more nutritious foods, but there is also, and that is a very important point, a large and growing diminution of meat consumption, especially that of beef and mutton, accompanied by an increase in the use of horse and dog flesh and other inferior meats. Nothing annoys our Protectionist friends more than references to the consumption of horse flesh in Germany. They always seem to think that a very unfair argument; but you cannot get away from it. Whenever you read German statistics bearing on the condition of the living of the people, you are continually brought up against the growing consumption of horse flesh and the increase in the slaughter of dogs for food. The growth in the consumption of horseflesh would probably be still more marked were it not for the introduction of electric tramways and the consequent diminution in the number of tram-horses. Not only have you got a growing consumption of horseflesh and other inferior meat, but the Prussian Government has also found itself compelled to take the most extraordinary measures for the sale of (or attempt to sell) diseased meat. They have started an institution which is technically known

there as the *Freibank*, or a stall free from market tolls, in the meat markets, at which is sold diseased meat which has undergone a process of sterilisation to make it more or less possible for human consumption. An interesting and instructive account of this *Freibank* meat is given in an article in *The Contemporary Review* for December, 1910. This article shows that, whereas in England a diseased animal is condemned and destroyed, in Germany it is, at least partially, used for human food after undergoing a process of sterilisation under sanitary inspection, which renders the flesh free from living germs. Of this meat thus scientifically sterilised, the writer of the article, Miss Smith Rossie, a lecturer on sanitary matters, says: "It is, however, very unpleasant to behold, and the blackish liquor that has been drawn off by the hot air is still less inviting, yet it is sold to the poor people who can purchase it either for soup-making or as a restorative for infants and sick people." She adds that salting and *Durchkühlung* are used for the less severe forms of disease, the time occupied in the freezing process being usually twenty-one days. Both measly cattle and pigs are used for human food. Although there are four of these *Freibank* buildings in Berlin, the meat sold at them is evidently regarded with disgust. The Governor of one of the large prisons of Germany, being asked if the criminals were fed on it, exclaimed, "No, no; not even in the labour homes do we give *Freibank* meat." Yet I understand that an endeavour has recently been made by the Prussian Government by means of an Administrative Order to induce small towns to extend the system, in the hope that the inhabitants may gradually lose their repugnance for this class of meat.

I would like to give you a few figures, showing the decline of meat consumption in the kingdom of Saxony, taken from Dr. von Tyszka's articles. In the year 1903 there were slaughtered in the kingdom of Saxony 43,464 oxen. In the year 1908 the number had decreased to 36,663. The number of pigs, on the other hand, had increased from 1,144,485 to 1,338,089, again showing that if you raise prices the inferior article will be substituted for the superior. The number of horses had increased from 9,800 to 12,000, and the number of dogs from 2,619 to 3,776. Thus, on a percentage basis, it can be fairly said that horses have increased 25 per cent. and dogs 30 per

cent., and that, too, in years of good trade and rising wages. And they have had exactly the same trouble in other countries. In Dresden, a town which has very careful statistics, the figures are extremely striking. In 1900 the total meat consumption was 72·23 kilograms per head, and in 1909 that had declined to 58·72. That of veal, beef, and mutton—all the better meats—had greatly declined: veal 23 per cent., beef about 22, and mutton 33 per cent. Pork had also declined, but somewhat less—20 per cent. "The poorer classes," adds Dr. von Tyszka, "were obliged to renounce to a large extent the consumption of nutritious meat for the much cheaper but innutritious potato, the consumption of flour and bread also declining during the same period." All through you will find an absolute diminution in the consumption of food. Dr. von Tyszka also shows that a similar state of affairs prevails in Munich. I have taken statistics from him as a man generally recognised as an expert in this matter, and who has been careful to draw his material from trustworthy sources, which in this particular instance are municipal octroi and slaughter-house statistics. You will find Tariff Reform articles showing that the consumption per head in Germany has increased, and you may be asked how this agrees with the figures I am giving you now. But, as a matter of fact, there are no reliable statistics for working-class consumption in the German Empire. Some general figures published by those who are in favour of the maintenance of the present fiscal system have a constant tendency to show things better than they really are. But the statistics I have quoted are drawn from towns which still have a system of octroi duties, and are, therefore, in a position to ascertain the exact amount of meat which comes into the town. General experience in Germany, as far as accurate figures exist, has always shown similar results. If time permitted, I could read you extracts from speeches made recently and also last autumn, in the German Parliament by Liberals, Socialists, and Radicals, all stating in emphatic terms, which have not really been controverted, the increasing distress of the people, their growing difficulty in providing food, and the disastrous effects of Protection on the welfare of the population, as well as the growing demand for the abolition of duties on food. Yet the answer to those demands by a Prussian Minister was that, as meat had become so dear people had better habituate

themselves to doing with less. They have had exactly the same trouble in Austria and in France. Prof. Yves Guyot, in that extremely interesting and effective book of his called *The Comedy of Protection*, which might with equal or greater justice be called "the tragedy of Protection," points out how extraordinarily low is the meat consumption in France compared to what is normally regarded by all leading physiologists as the right quantity of animal food. He further points out that the price of meat in France is very much higher than in Free Trade England, adding that, by taking down the tariff wall that prevents the French people buying Argentine, New Zealand, American, Canadian, or other meat in the world's market, this state of things would find an automatic remedy. In dealing with that question, he has investigated among other things the amount of butcher's meat which is allowed in France to a soldier on active service, or, say, in garrison. The English soldier has a ration of 375 grammes a day; the Prussian soldier has 340, and the French soldier 300; the Italian and Russian 200, and the Austrian 190. Yet, as M. Yves Guyot points out, the average meat consumption per head in France is only about half that fixed by experts for the French soldier, who is certainly not overfed, and which amounts to about 108 kilogrames per annum, while even the much better fed population of Paris only consumed 79 kilogrames per head in 1880, which fell to 60 kilogrammes in 1903.

In this connexion it is interesting to compare the prices of qualities of meat that are more likely to affect the working classes than the first qualities which are consumed chiefly by richer people. If you compare the prices in London in 1909 of Canadian second quality beef killed at port, you find it works out at 50·3, whereas in Berlin beef of third quality, certainly much inferior, works out at 58·8. In London Argentine chilled beef was 43·4, and in Berlin beef of the fourth quality—you can imagine what that would be like—works out at 49·03. Whereas in London in 1909 New Zealand mutton worked out at 34·2, second quality mutton at Berlin was 53·15. These statistics of the Berlin Municipal Bureau show an enormous difference in price, particularly in the lower qualities. In Austria, as also in France, you have the same condition of things. In reference to the enormous increase in the German consumption of potatoes, I would like to point out that Herr Bock, a

Socialist deputy, speaking in the Reichstag on February 21st said that while the annual consumption of potatoes per head in England was 114 kilograms, in Germany it amounted to no less than 605. As a matter of fact, it is continually and rapidly increasing in proportion to the fall in the consumption of wheat, which in Germany has been from 91·2 kilograms per head of population in 1893–8 to 77·5 kilograms in 1908–9. The consumption of rye has also fallen. In addition to the effect of this under-feeding on infantile mortality and on consumption, it also aggravates the great evil of drunkenness. Under-feeding is undoubtedly one of the most frequent causes of intemperance all the world over. The attempt to make up for the want of nutritive value, particularly of carbo-hydrates, which give heat, by alcoholic stimulants, has been dwelt upon by many medical authorities of all countries. And the contention has been proved by some great German medical men, who were asked by the Government to investigate the reason of the increased drunkenness, and who laid it down that one of the main causes of increased drunkenness was under-feeding. The *Berliner Tageblatt* (February 14th, 1912), sums up a good deal of what I have been saying to you: "The workman is able only under great difficulties to increase his wages; the minor officials in the service of the State and in private undertakings must live on the same salary, without having means of getting increases. And also the small business man is feeling in his own person the universal appreciation of prices. The result of this is a decline in the general standard of living and under-feeding of children, a renunciation of many amenities of life, and in many cases compulsory indebtedness."

I have dealt thus far with the food part of the question, but that is not the whole of it by any means, although it is in some respects, perhaps, its most important element. There remain, however, clothing and boots—a matter of great importance to the health of the population. I dare-say a good many of you have heard about the American wool tariff and the famous schedule K, one of the classical instances of robbery which the American tariff has to offer to the student of this most ingenious device for compelling an enormous continent to pay tribute to a few people who have been clever enough to seize the political machine at Washington. The American people

are the most patient people I have ever met. No other would have tolerated such a system, as exemplified in their tariff on raw wool and on woollen goods, running to 50 and 60 per cent. One of the results of their woollen duty is that in a very cold and inclement country the great mass of the population is obliged to wear cotton goods, which are quite unsuited to the climate, simply because they cannot afford to buy wool. Those interested in the subject would do well to refer to an important article written by Miss Tarbell in *The American Magazine*, in October, 1910. Regarded from the point of view of public health, there appears to be very little doubt that a considerable amount of tuberculosis and pneumonia in the United States to-day is to be traced directly to these duties on wool, which compel a large part of the population to wear cotton goods. Strange as it may appear, one of the great fights which is being waged at the present moment by the new democratic majority in Congress turns on this wool tax, and there is little doubt that that good fight will eventually succeed. Miss Tarbell, dealing with this question, makes the following statement about all-wool goods: "For twenty years this valuable standard material has been every day receding farther from the great mass of Americans. Many housewives the country over have ceased buying woollen blankets, substituting the cotton-filled puff or 'comfort.' A member of the Nurses' Settlement in New York told me last winter that in only one of 400 families in the East side which she had visited in three months had she seen a pair of woollen blankets, and in this case there was a daughter ill with tuberculosis, and the family had united in trying to give her what protection they could....A friend of mine who meets weekly with a group of housewives from one of the tenement districts of New York asked them for me how much wool they bought. 'They laughed at me as if I had asked them how many diamonds they bought,' she said. 'Why, we can't have woollen clothes!' they replied."

One of the evil effects of this artificial raising of prices and making things dearer on the Protectionist system, is that not only do you lead to a substitution of inferior things, but to an enormous amount of adulteration of goods, a deterioration of quality as much as a substitution of material. I have said that wool and woollen goods is one instance in America. You can easily work the thing out

with boots. If you are going to put a 10 per cent. duty on leather coming into the country, and a 15 per cent. duty on boots, you increase the cost to every man who is making boots. A rise of 15 per cent. on boots will be a very serious item to the working classes of the country. You are aware of the great difficulty of getting children to come to school properly shod, and you already know that people who have bad boots are much more likely to catch colds and chills than those who have good ones. You can work out the immediate effect of a rise of 10 to 15 per cent. in the price of boots on the growing generation of school-children as well as on the health of adults. I have only given you samples, so to speak, and outlines of the effects of Protection on public health which you can fill in for yourselves, but I may add one remarkable and significant fact, which is that the death rate is lowest in Free Trade countries —England, Denmark, and Holland—and highest in the most highly protected countries. I will not claim that as an immediate concomitant of Free Trade policy, nor do I propose that we should say "Tariff Reform means more deaths," though if one could promise more work to the undertaker that might stimulate the Tariff propaganda—among coffin-makers. It is not altogether surprising, however, that in England, Denmark, and Holland, which are all Free Trade countries and have practically no food taxes, the bulk of the population are better fed, better clothed, and better housed than in Protected countries, and *a priori*, it will naturally follow that, other things being fairly equal, the death rate will be probably lower than in Protected countries. Statistically, the fact stands; of course, we can interpret it as we like; but that the introduction of a Protective system must in the future, as it has in the past, in this or in any other country, have a deleterious effect in all directions on the health of the nation, seems to me to be practically axiomatic.

None of the statistical arguments that certain people will be better off, and that certain industries will be stimulated, can get away from that general broad aspect of the question. Although I have no doubt Protectionists in England would say that, whereas these ill results may come from the exaggerated duties in other countries, it does not follow that they would all arise from any duties proposed here. All I can say on that point is that the same story has been told over and over again to the people in

those other countries. The fact that the duties are light and will not be raised, the fairy tale that the foreigner will pay the tax, every one of these legends was told by Bismarck to the German Free Traders from the year 1879 to the day he died, and every one of them has been proved untrue by bitter experience. For me the proposals of the Tariff Reformers appear to undo all the work done for generations, and now being done, to uplift the people of this country. I fail to see any object in our Housing Schemes, Insurance Scheme, Sanatoria, and Feeding of School-children, in all the work we are trying to do—slowly and clumsily and rather feebly, if you will—if we are to be suddenly and gratuitously burdened by this additional handicap. We are now endeavouring to accommodate wages to the rise in the price of food which we cannot help. Why add to that an additional difficulty and increase the disturbance? We are endeavouring to build cheaper houses, and yet it is suggested that we should tax everything that comes into the house. You are getting window-sashes and frames from Sweden; it is argued that it is better to fell British trees, and have those articles made here, no matter what they cost. The result would be to increase the cost of every cottage of every working-man throughout the country, and to make it more difficult for the municipalities to undertake a Housing Scheme at all. The difficulties are great enough already. Even if the Swedish carpenter has a little less work, that will not help the British carpenter much if the municipalities cease to build houses, and thus reduce the demand for their labour to a far greater extent.

I have found in this controversy that people have paid too little attention to practical considerations. I should like to direct people's minds to these practical points, which would hit us in every-day life, and hit us in every direction, so far as these great national health services of the country are concerned. If I have succeeded in a very imperfect form—for which I apologise sincerely—in indicating some directions in which further work and research may be undertaken—and I should be glad to help any one desiring to follow up the subject with such bibliographical notes as I possess, and to stimulate inquiry among such thoughtful circles as that which I have the honour to address to-night—I shall feel I have been amply repaid for the work which this lecture has cost me, and I hope you will feel you have not entirely wasted your evening.

Some Reflexions, Seamanlike and Otherwise, on the loss of the Titanic.*

By Joseph Conrad

It is with a certain bitterness that one must admit to oneself that the Titanic had a "good press." It is perhaps because I have no great practice of daily newspapers (I have never seen so many of them together lying about my room) that the white spaces and the big lettering of the headlines have an incongruously festive air to my eyes, a disagreeable effect of a feverish exploitation of a sensational God-send. And if ever a loss at sea fell under the definition in the terms of a bill of lading, of Act of God this one does, in its magnitude, suddenness and severity; and in the chastening influence it should have on the self-confidence of mankind.

I say this with all the seriousness the occasion demands, though I have neither the competence nor the wish to take a theological view of this great misfortune, sending so many souls to their last account. It is but a natural reflection. Another one flowing also from the phraseology of bills of lading (a bill of lading is a shipping document limiting in certain of its clauses the liability of the carrier) is that the "King's Enemies" of a more or less overt sort, are not altogether sorry that this fatal mishap should strike at the prestige of the greatest merchant service of the world. I believe that not a thousand miles from these shores certain public prints have betrayed in gothic letters their satisfaction—to speak plainly—by rather ill-natured comments.

In what light one is to look at the action of the American Senate is more difficult to say. From a certain point of view the sight of the august senators of a great power rushing to New York and beginning to bully and badger the luckless "Yamsi"—on the very quay-side so to speak—seems to furnish the Shakespearian touch of the comic to the real tragedy of the fatuous drowning of all these people who to the last moment put their trust in mere

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bigness, in the reckless affirmations of commercial men and mere technicians and in the irresponsible paragraphs of the newspapers booming these ships! Yes, a grim touch of comedy. One asks oneself what these men are after, with this very provincial display of authority. I beg my friends in the United States pardon for calling these zealous senators men. I don't wish to be disrespectful. They may be of the stature of demi-gods for all I know, but at that great distance from the shores of effete Europe so deplorably lacking in the genus "boss," and in presence of so many guileless dead, their size seems diminished from this side. What are they after? What is there for them to find out? We know what had happened. The ship has scraped her side against a piece of ice, and sank after floating for two hours and a half, taking a lot of people down with her. What more can they find out from the unfair badgering of the unhappy "Yamsi," or the ruffianly abuse of the same. "Yamsi," I should explain, is a mere code address, and I use it here symbolically. I have seen commerce pretty close, I know what it is worth, and I have no particular regard for commercial magnates, but one must protest against these Bumble-like proceedings. Is it indignation at the loss of so many lives which is at work here? Well, the American railroads kill ever so many more people during one single year I dare say. Then why don't these dignitaries come down on the presidents of their own railroads, of which one can't say whether they are mere means of transportation or a sort of gambling game for the use of American plutocrats. Is it only an ardent and, upon the whole, praiseworthy desire for information? But the reports of the inquiry tell us that the august senators, though putting lots of questions testifying to the complete innocence and even blankness of their minds, are unable to understand what the second officer is saying to them. We are so informed by the press from the other side. Even such a simple expression as that one of the look-out men was posted in the "eyes of the ship" is too much for the senators of the land of graphic expression. What it must be in the more recondite matters I won't even try to think, because I have no mind to smile just now. They were greatly exercised about the sound of explosions which have been heard when half the ship was under water already. Was there one? Were there two? They

seemed to be smelling a rat there. Has not some charitable soul told them (what even our schoolboys who read stories know) that when a ship sinks from a leak like this, a deck or two is always blown up ; and that when a steamship goes down by the head, the boilers may and often do, break adrift with a sound which resembles the sound of an explosion. And they may, indeed, explode, for all I know. In the only case I have seen of a steamship sinking there was such a sound, but I didn't dive down after her to investigate. She was not of 45,000 tons and declared unsinkable, but the sight was impressive enough. I shall never forget the muffled, mysterious detonation, the sudden agitation of the sea round the slowly raised stern, and to this day I have in my eye the propeller, seen perfectly still in its frame against a clear evening sky.

But perhaps the second officer has explained to them by this time this and a few other little facts. Though why an officer of the British merchant service should answer the questions of any king, emperor, autocrat, or senator of any foreign power (as to an event in which a British ship alone was concerned, and which did not even take place in the territorial waters of that power) passes my understanding. The only authority he is bound to answer is the Board of Trade. But with what face the Board of Trade, which, having made the regulations for ten-thousand ton ships put its dear old bald head under its wing for ten years, took it out only to shelve an important report, and with a dreary murmur " Unsinkable " put it back again, in the hope of not being disturbed for another ten years, with what face it will be putting questions to that man, who has done his duty, as to the facts of this disaster and as to his professional conduct in it—well, I don't know. I have the greatest respect for our established authorities. I am a disciplined man, and I have a natural indulgence for the weaknesses of human institutions ; but I will own that at times I have regretted their—how shall I say it ?—their imponderability. A Board of Trade—what is it ? A Board of....I believe the Speaker of the Irish Parliament is one of the members of it. A ghost. Less than that ; as yet a mere memory. An office with adequate and no doubt comfortable furniture. A lot of perfectly irresponsible gentlemen, who exist packed in its equable atmosphere softly, as if in a lot of cotton-wool, and with no care in the world ; for there can be no care without personal

responsibility—such, for instance, as the seamen have—those seamen from whose mouths this irresponsible institution can take away the bread—as a disciplinary measure. Yes—it's that. And what more? The name of a politician—a party man! Less than nothing. A mere void without as much as the distant shadow of responsibility cast into it from that light in which move the masses of men who work, who deal in things and face the realities—not the words of this life.

Years ago I remember overhearing two genuine shellbacks of the old type commenting on a ship-officer, who, if not exactly incompetent, yet did not commend himself to their severe judgment of accomplished sailor-men. Said one, resuming and concluding the discussion in a funnily judicial tone:

"The Board of Trade must have been drunk when they gave him his certificate."

I confess that this notion of the Board of Trade as an entity having a brain which could be overcome with the fumes of strong liquor charmed me exceedingly. For then it would have been unlike the limited companies of which some exasperated wit has once said that they had no souls to be saved and no bodies to be kicked, and thus were freed in this world and the next from all the effective sanctions of conscientious conduct. But, unfortunately, the picturesque pronouncement overheard by me is only a characteristic sally of an annoyed sailor. The Board of Trade is composed of bloodless departments. It has no limbs and no physiognomy, or else at the forthcoming inquiry it might have paid to the victims of the Titanic disaster the small tribute of a blush. I ask myself whether the Marine Department of the Board of Trade did really believe, when they decided to shelve the report on equipment for a time, that a ship of 45,000 tons, that *any* ship, could be made practically indestructible by means of watertight bulkheads? It seems incredible to anybody who had ever reflected upon the properties of material, such as wood or steel. You can't, let builders say what they like, make a ship of such dimensions as strong proportionately as a much smaller one. The shocks our old whalers had to stand amongst the heavy floes in Baffin's Bay were perfectly staggering, notwithstanding the most skilful handling, and yet they lasted for years. The Titanic, if one may believe the last reports, has only rubbed along a

piece of ice which, I suspect, was not an enormously bulky and comparatively easily seen berg, but the low edge of a floe—and sank. Leisurely enough, God knows—and here the advantage of bulkheads comes in—for time is a great friend, a good helper—though in this lamentable case they served only to prolong the agony of those who could not be saved. But she sank, causing, apart from the sorrow and the pity of the loss of so many lives, a sort of surprising consternation that such a thing should have happened at all. Why? You build a 45,000 tons hotel of thin steel plates to secure the patronage of, say, a couple of thousand rich people (for if it had been for the emigrant trade alone, there would have been no such exaggeration of mere size), you decorate it in the style of the Pharaohs or in the Louis Quinze style—I don't know which—and to please the aforesaid fatuous handful of individuals, who have more money than they know what to do with, and to the applause of two continents you launch that mass with 2,000 people on board at 21 knots across the sea—a perfect exhibition of the modern blind trust in mere material and appliances. And then this happens. General consternation. The blind trust in material and appliances has received a terrible shock. I will say nothing of the credulity which accepts any statement which specialists, technicians, are pleased to make, whether for purposes of gain or glory. You stand there astonished and hurt in your profoundest sensibilities. But what else under the circumstances could you expect?

For my part I could much sooner believe in an unsinkable ship of 3,000 tons than in one of 40,000 tons. It is one of those things that stand to reason. You can't increase the thickness of scantling and plates indefinitely. And the mere weight of this bigness is an added disadvantage. In reading the reports, the first reflexion which occurs to one is that, if that luckless ship had been a couple of hundred feet shorter, she would have probably gone clear of the danger. But then, perhaps, she could not have had a swimming bath and a French café. That, of course, is a serious consideration. I am well aware that those responsible for her so short and fatal existence ask us in desolate accents to believe that if she had hit end-on she would have survived. Which, by a sort of coy implication, seems to mean that it was all the fault of the officer of the watch (he is dead now) for trying to avoid the obstacle,

We shall have presently, in deference to commercial and industrial interests, a new kind of seamanship. A very new and "progressive" kind. If you see anything in the way, by no means try to avoid it; smash at it full tilt. And then—and then only, you shall see the triumph of material, of clever contrivances, of the whole box of engineering tricks, in fact, and cover with glory a commercial concern of the most unmitigated sort, a great Trust, and a great shipbuilding yard, justly famed for the super-excellence of its material and workmanship. Unsinkable! See? I told you she was unsinkable, if only handled in accordance with the new seamanship. Everything's in that. And, doubtless, the Board of Trade, if properly approached, would consent to give the needed instuctions to its examiners of Masters and Mates. Behold the examination-room of the future. Enter to the grizzled examiner a young man of modest aspect: "Are you well up in modern seamanship?" "I hope so, sir." "H'm, let's see. You are at night on the bridge in charge of a 150,000 tons ship, with a motor track, organ-loft, &c., &c., with a full cargo of passengers, a full crew of 1,500 café waiters, two sailors and a boy, three collapsible boats as per Board of Trade regulations, and going at your three-quarter speed of, say, about forty knots. You perceive suddenly right ahead, and close to, something that looks like a large ice-floe. What would you do?" "Put the helm amidships." "Very well. Why?" "In order to hit end on." "On what grounds should you endeavour to hit end on?" "Because we are taught by our builders and masters that the heavier the smash, the smaller the damage, and because the requirements of material should be attended to."

And so on and so on. The new seamanship: when in doubt try to ram fairly—whatever's before you. Very simple. If only the Titanic had rammed that piece of ice (which was *not* a monstrous berg) fairly, every puffing paragraph would have been vindicated in the eyes of the credulous public which pays. But would it have been? Well, I doubt it. I am well aware that in the 'eighties the steamship Arizona, one of the "greyhounds of the ocean" in the jargon of that day, did run bows on against a very unmistakeable iceberg, and managed to get into port on her collision bulkhead. But the Arizona was not, if I remember rightly, 5,000 tons register, let alone 45,000,

and she was not going at twenty knots per hour. I can't be perfectly certain at this distance of time, but her sea-speed could not have been more than fourteen at the outside. Both these facts made for safety. And, even if she had been engined to go twenty knots, there would not have been behind that speed the enormous mass, so difficult to check in its impetus, the terrific weight of which is bound to do damage to itself or others at the slightest contact.

I assure you it is not for the vain pleasure of talking about my own poor experiences, but only to illustrate my point, that I will relate here a very unsensational little incident I witnessed now rather more than twenty years ago in Sydney, N.S.W. Ships were beginning then to grow bigger year after year, though, of course, the present dimensions were not dreamt of even. I was standing on the Circular Quay with a Sydney pilot, watching a big mail steamship of one of our best-known companies being brought alongside. We admired her lines, her noble appearance, and were impressed by her size as well, though her length, I imagine, was hardly half that of the Titanic.

She came into the Cove (as that part of the harbour is called), of course very slowly, and at some fifty feet or so short of the quay she lost her way. That quay was then a wooden one, a fine structure of mighty piles and stringers bearing a roadway—a thing of great strength. The ship, as I have said before, stopped moving when some fifty feet from it. Then her engines were rung on slow ahead, and almost immediately rung off again. The propeller made just about five turns, I should say. She began to move, stealing on, so to speak without a ripple; coming alongside with the utmost gentleness. I went on looking her over, very much interested, but the man with me, the pilot, muttered under his breath: "Too much, too much." His exercised judgment had warned him of what I did not even suspect. But I believe that neither of us was exactly prepared for what happened. There was a faint concussion of the ground under our feet, a groaning of piles, a snapping of great iron bolts, and with a sound of ripping and splintering, as when a tree is blown down by the wind, a great strong piece of wood, a baulk of squared timber, was displaced several feet as if by enchantment. I looked at my companion in amazement. "I could not have believed it," I declared. "No," he said. "You would not have thought she would have cracked an egg—eh?"

I certainly wouldn't have thought that. He shook his head, and added: "Ah! These great, big things, they want some handling."

Some months afterwards I was back in Sydney. The same pilot brought me in from sea. And I found the same steamship, or else another as like her as two peas, lying at anchor not far from us. The pilot told me she had arrived the day before, and that he was to take her alongside to-morrow. I reminded him jocularly of the damage to the quay. "Oh!" he said, "we are not allowed now to bring them in under their own steam. We are using tugs."

A very wise regulation. And this is my point—that size is to a certain extent an element of weakness. The bigger the ship, the more delicately she must be handled. Here is a contact which, in the pilot's own words, you wouldn't think could have cracked an egg; with the astonishing result of something like eighty feet of good strong wooden quay shaken loose, iron bolts snapped, a baulk of stout timber splintered like matchwood. Now, suppose that quay had been of granite (as surely it is now) —or, instead of the quay, if there had been say, a North Atlantic fog there, with a full-grown iceberg in it, awaiting the gentle contact of a ship groping its way along blindfold? Something would have been hurt, but it would not have been the iceberg.

Apparently, there is a point in development when it ceases to be a true progress—in trade, in games, in the marvellous handiwork of men, and even in their demands and desires and aspirations of the moral and material kind. There is a point when progress, to remain a real advance, must change slightly the direction of its line. But this is a wide question. What I wanted to point out here is—that the old Arizona, the marvel of her day, was proportionately stronger, handier, better equipped, than this triumph of modern naval architecture, the loss of which, in common parlance, shall remain the sensation of this year. The clatter of the presses has been worthy of the tonnage, of the preliminary pæans of triumph round that vanished hull, of the reckless statements, and elaborate descriptions of its ornate splendour. A great babble of news (and what sort of news too, good heavens) and eager comment has arisen around this catastrophe, though it seems to me that a less strident note would have been more becoming in the presence of so many victims left struggling

on the sea, of lives miserably thrown away for nothing, or worse than nothing, for false standards of achievement, to satisfy a vulgar demand of a few moneyed people for a banal hotel luxury—the only one they can understand, and because the big ship pays, in one way or another: in money or in advertising value.

It is in more ways than one a very ugly business, and a mere scrape along the ship's side, so slight that, if reports are to be believed, it did not interrupt a card party in the gorgeously fitted (but in chaste style) smoking-room, or was it in the delightful French café, is enough to bring on the exposure. All the people on board existed under a sense of false security. How false, it has been sufficiently demonstrated. And the fact which seems undoubted, that some of them actually were reluctant to enter the boats, when told to do so, shows the strength of that falsehood. Incidentally, it shows also the sort of discipline on board these ships, the sort of hold kept on the passengers in the face of the unforgiving sea. These people seemed to imagine it an optional matter. Whereas the order to leave the ship should be an order of the sternest character, to be obeyed unquestioningly and promptly by every one on board, with men enough to enforce it at once, and to carry it out methodically and swiftly. And it is no use to say it cannot be done, for it can. It has been done. The only requisite is manageableness of the ship herself and of the numbers she carries on board. That is the great thing which makes for safety. A commander should be able to hold his ship and everything on board of her in the hollow of his hand as it were. But with the modern foolish trust in material, and with those floating hotels, this has become impossible. A man may do his best, but he cannot succeed in a task which from greed, or more likely from sheer stupidity, has been made too great for anybody's strength.

The readers of this REVIEW, who have cast a friendly eye nearly two years ago on my *Reminiscences*, and know how much the merchant service, ships and men, has been to me, will understand my indignation that those men of whom (speaking in no sentimental phrase, but in the very truth of feeling) I can't even now think otherwise than as brothers, have been put by their commercial employers in the impossibility to perform efficiently their plain duty; and that from motives which I shall not enumerate here, but whose intrinsic unworthiness is plainly revealed by the greatness, the

miserable greatness of that disaster. Some of them have perished. To die for commerce is hard enough, but to go under that sea, we have been trained to combat, with a sense of failure in the supreme duty of one's calling is indeed a bitter fate. Thus they are gone, and the responsibility remains with the living who will have no difficulty in replacing them by others, just as good, at the same wage. It was their bitter fate. But I, who can look at some arduous years when their duty was my duty too, and their feelings were my feelings, can remember some of us who once upon a time were more fortunate.

It is of them that I would talk a little, for my own comfort partly, and also because I am sticking all the time to my subject to illustrate my point, the point of manageableness which I have raised just now. Since the memory of the lucky Arizona has been evoked by others than myself, and made use of by me for my own purpose, let me call up the ghost of another ship of that distant day whose less lucky destiny inculcates another lesson making for my argument. The Douro, a ship belonging to the R.M.S.P. Co., was rather less than one-tenth the measurement of the Titanic. Yet, strange as it may appear to the ineffable hotel exquisites who form the bulk of the first-class Cross-Atlantic passengers, people of position and wealth and refinement did not consider it an intolerable hardship to travel in her, even all the way from South America, this being the service she was engaged upon. Of her speed I know nothing, but it must have been the average of the period, and the decorations of her saloons were, I dare say, quite up to the mark; but I doubt if her birth had been boastfully paragraphed all round the press, because that was not the fashion of the time. She was not a mass of material gorgeously furnished and upholstered. She was a ship. And she was not, in the apt words of an article by Commander C. Crutchley, R.N.R., which I have just read, "run by a sort of hotel syndicate composed of the Chief Engineer, the Purser, and the Captain," as these monstrous Atlantic ferries are. She was really commanded, manned, and equipped as a ship meant to keep the sea: a ship first and last in the fullest meaning of the term, as the fact I am going to relate will show.

She was off the Spanish coast, homeward bound, and fairly full, just about like the Titanic; and further, the pro-

portion of her crew, I remember quite well, to her passengers was very much the same. The exact number of souls on board I have forgotten. It might have been nearly 300, certainly no more. The night was moonlit, but hazy, the weather fine with a heavy swell running from the westward, which means that she must have been rolling a good deal, and in that respect the conditions for her were more adverse than in the case of the Titanic. Some time either just before or just after midnight, to the best of my recollection, she was run into amidships and at right angles by a large steamer which after the blow backed out, and, herself apparently damaged, remained motionless at some distance.

My recollection is that the Douro remained afloat after the collision for fifteen minutes or thereabouts. It might have been twenty, but certainly considerably under the half hour. In that time the boats were lowered, all the passengers put into them, and the lot shoved off. There was no time to do anything more. The crew went down with her, literally without a murmur. When she went she plunged bodily down like a stone. The only members of the ship's company who survived were the third officer, who was from the first ordered to take charge of the boats, and the seamen told off to man them, two in each. Nobody else was picked up. A quartermaster, one of the saved in the way of duty, with whom I talked a month or so afterwards, told me that they pulled up to the spot, but could neither see a head nor hear the faintest cry.

But I have forgotten. A passenger was drowned. She was a lady's maid who, frenzied with terror, refused to leave the ship. One of the boats waited near by till the chief officer, finding himself absolutely unable to tear the girl away from the rail to which she clung with a frantic grasp, ordered the boat away out of danger. My quartermaster told me that he spoke over to them in his ordinary voice, and this was the last sound heard before the ship sank.

The rest is silence. I dare say there was the usual official inquiry, but who cared for it? That sort of thing speaks for itself with no uncertain voice; though the papers, I remember, gave the event no space to speak of: no large headlines—no headlines at all. You see it was not the fashion at the time. A seaman-like piece of work, of which one cherishes the old memory at this juncture more

than ever before. She was *a ship* commanded, manned, equipped—not a sort of marine Ritz, proclaimed unsinkable and sent adrift with its casual population upon the sea, without enough boats, without enough seamen (but with a Parisian café and four hundred of poor devils of waiters) to meet dangers which, let the engineers say what they like, lurk always amongst the waves, sent with a blind trust in mere material, light heartedly, to a most miserable, most fatuous disaster.

And there are, too, many ugly developments about this tragedy. The rush of the senatorial inquiry before the poor wretches escaped from the jaws of death had time to draw breath ; the vituperative abuse of a man no more guilty than others in this matter, and the more than the suspicion of it being a political move to get home on the M.T. Company, into which, in common parlance, the U.S. Government has got its knife I don't pretend to understand why, though with the rest of the world I am aware of the fact. Maybe there may be an excellent and worthy reason for it ; but I venture to suggest that to take advantage for it, on the strength of so many pitiful corpses, is not pretty. No, I am not afraid to say that it is not pretty. And the exploiting of the mere sensation on the other side is not pretty in its wealth of heartless inventions. Neither is the welter of Marconi lies which has not been sent vibrating without some reason, for which it would be nauseous to inquire too closely. And the calumnious, baseless, gratuitous, circumstantial lie, charging poor Captain Smith with desertion of his post by means of suicide is the vilest and most ugly thing of all in this outburst of journalistic enterprise, without feeling, without honour, without decency.

But all this has its moral. And that other sinking which I have related here and to the memory of which a seaman turns with relief and thankfulness, has its moral too. Yes, material may fail, and men, too, may fail sometimes ; but more often men, when they are given the chance, will prove themselves truer than steel, that wonderful thin steel from which the sides and the bulkheads of our modern sea-leviathans are made.

The International Society

By Walter Sickert.

It would be difficult to estimate how much students of modern painting owe to the indefatigable enterprise of Mr. Francis Howard in the collection and arrangement of old and modern paintings that the International Society of Sculptors, Painters, and Gravers has submitted to the public over a period of fourteen years. If ever there was a case of *l'état c'est moi*, Mr. Howard would have the right, if he chose, to say so. These exhibitions have had, I suppose, during the time covered by them, more effect in educating a generation of English students of art to modern realities than all the other societies put together. Reputations have been made, modified, and unmade; and now Mr. Howard's close association with a firm of picture dealers of such world-wide reputation as Messrs. Knödler's can only extend the field on which he will be able to draw for the exhibitions at the Grafton. The members of the society, with a courage and persistency that is above praise, expose themselves annually to the most searching comparisons with the mighty dead, and their individual positions, so far from suffering, have been rather strengthened thereby. Here and there, in the earlier days, one more timid or more modest, estimating himself an earthenware vessel, has resigned, fearing the impact in full stream with the brazen pottery of the classics. He has been shown to be in error.

Probably something like a double or treble audience has been created. A section of the public has been allowed to find a natural delight in the prettier and more amateurish productions to which they were accustomed. Social and commercial aspirations have received a measure of satisfaction at the hands of this section. This portion of the audience—divided, probably, fairly equally between the stalls and the pit, as it were—have been able to enjoy the exhibitions for what they liked, and to take the serious ossature of the shows on trust as "very clever," and not sufficiently overwhelming to be embarrassing. Did not

Goethe, in his preface to *Faust*, recommend some such judicious mixture to capture at once the initiated and the profane.

Like a wise impresario, Mr. Howard's motto has been "Works when possible. When not possible, at any rate, names." The first president, with a playful cynicism which was characteristic, allowed pictures by Degas to figure on the walls, and the name of Degas on posters in Knightsbridge, not only without the great man's consent, but in defiance of his expressed wishes. It was the inauguration of a "new style" in artistic etiquette, and if an individual here and there has been ruffled, the public has certainly been the gainer.

When I think of the difference in the opportunities of study for modern students now, and twenty or thirty years ago, I am inclined to say that there will be no excuse if the rising generation do not produce a small batch, at least, of masterly workmen.

Mr. Howard does well to lead us, at the height of the nonsense-boom, at once before the monumental Millet, *Une Famille de Paysans*. The sublime man and his stolid spouse face the spectator with all the gravity and symmetry of two caryatids, while the child essays, a baby Samson, the strength of the pillars of his house. Such works in their mighty simplicity are the ultimate words of art. There is only one way to draw and one way to paint, and here it is. There is no new art. There are no new methods. There is no new theory. The old one is great. It prevails, it has prevailed, and it will prevail. There can no more be a new art, a new painting, a new drawing than there can be new arithmetic, new dynamics, or a new morality.

When it seems that a new man or a new school have invented a new thing, it will only be found that the gifted among them have secured a firmer hold than usual of some old thing. Degas can only draw with the drawing of Mantegna and Holbein, if he applies that drawing to other subjects with other curiosities, and a point of cynicism that is other. Manet is only a blonde Ribera of weaker grasp. What is it that Pissarro, Sisley, and Monet have had to remind us? They have had to take us back to the primitives; they have had to repurge painting of the hollow brown shadows. They have had to point to the Venetians, and recite again this law: if you use colour at all it is written in the immutable and mysterious laws

of harmony that the colour in the shadow must be the sister of the colour in the light. You are only a painter on condition that you discover and maintain this particular relation with justice and decision.

What is the sum of the teaching of the impressionists in the matter of execution. Reacting from the tendency of much admirable work to become too set, they suggested forcibly that it were better to keep the execution of studies from nature in a state of greater tentativeness, or looseness, to sacrifice much of decision and authority in order to remain a passive conduit for the fluidity of the shifting impressions received from nature. The body of their achievement is not only of a very high order and of great intrinsic value, but they have left the art invigorated and refreshed. They have left it renewed and populated where there was a danger of sterility.

The error of the critical quidnunc is to suppose that the older things are *superseded*. They are not *superseded*. They have been *added to*. That is all.

I have met many a young neo-fervent who, I am sure, accounts Millet "a back number." "Salt may have been very well," he says, "for our fathers; but these new salt substitutes save the waiters a lot of trouble." I doubt if such a one would be at all impressed if I told him that Degas adores and reverences every line from the hand of Millet. We all know the story of the old Frenchman at his club, who overheard a youth speak of a certain lady as "Marie." "How odd it is," drawled the old man, "when you are in the presence of Madame la comtesse you always call her 'Madame la comtesse,' and when you are not in her presence you call her 'Marie.' And I, who am her cousin, call her 'Marie' when I am with her, and when I am not in her presence I call her 'Madame la comtesse.' *Comme c'est étrange!*" You take it from me, young man, the Futurists may be great fun, and neo-swank excellent journalism, but it will pay you to keep in with the old masters.

This Millet is particularly interesting, because it is finished enough to tell its story, and unfinished enough to serve, in its different passages, as an authoritative and magistral lesson on the phrase "begun, continued, and ended." It is like a great dissection, laying bare at one glance, for masters and students alike, the mechanism of a creation of genius. We see how Millet *brought about* the

accomplishment of a work, "*Comme c'est amené,*" to use a favourite expression of Degas. You can follow the design from the state of linear expression revealed in the hands, through a stage of further modelling in the woman's torso, and on to the complete and exquisite finish of the man's head, triumphant in its placid achievement. Here is a chance for a patriotic millionaire. The place of this picture is in the National Gallery.

Carrière's is a reputation that critics are very shy of touching. The moment a man makes an obvious bid to cater for the most lachrymose sentimentality the timid critic feels himself, as it were, put upon his honour. To cavil is almost to be put into the position of the man in melodrama "who lifts his hand against a woman." To do so, even in the way of kindness, is to court a howl. Something analogous happened with our own Mr. Watts. He was interviewed and made to say that technique was not his aim (skilful though he was to a high degree); that his pictures were not paintings, but sermons; that he was warring against crimes and oppressions, and so on. If in the eighties any one had so much as squeaked in presence of a Watts he would have been apostrophised on all sides, somewhat thus: "But, disgusting personage, you are, then, in favour of rapine and oppression! Learn that, on *this* side of the Channel," &c. You see the patter from here.

And so Carrière also has been immune, and to be immune is to be praised. The world of his canvases is a world of tears, of the moaning, partings, and eternal regrets of shadowy heads, in which nothing is material but the eyes—eyes like boot-buttons in their insistent and solid detachment from impalpable surroundings. To criticise Carrière in France would, I am sure, seem almost like a slight on maternity. But maternity, to most of us, is, fortunately, a sunny recollection, in essence both palpable and delightful. The plain man, unaided by æsthetic bear-leaders, does, I am certain, repudiate in his heart these howling and ghostly impressions of what has always seemed to him the happiest relation.

Technically, everything has been said about Carrière when one has said "*C'est de la peinture creuse.*" It is *hollow* painting. One law may be found running through good art in all the ages. From the Greeks and the Indians (look at the reliefs on the staircase of the British Museum) to Keene and Pissarro plastic excellence consists in the

fact that the work is *plein*, as French sculptors and painters say, that is *full*. The forms are *convex* and not *concave*. Though in good carving material substance is cut away, the resulting forms are full, and have the character of substances built up and added to, and not of things from which subtraction has been made. I have not the verbal ability to make this clear on paper, but any one with a natural sense of the plastic in drawing or sculpture knows that this law exists.

Sound drawing and painting proceeds by cumulation, by addition; decadence sets in when subtraction plays a large part. An interesting example in the history of art has been the undoubted decadence of water-colour painting from the date when it was found that colour could be erased or scratched out, as well as put on. In the fine period of water-colour painting a thin bough was drawn by an outline. In the decadent period it begins to be formed by scratching out a light line from a darker ground. I remember a portrait of Verlaine by Carrière in which a white tuft of moustache is got by *wiping out*, and leaving a visible wipe to do the work that the real painter does by deliberately adding a touch of a certain tone knowingly concocted to a *nuance* decided on by himself.

The work of Carrière raises in a very interesting manner another question of immense importance, and that is the degree to which it is possible to eliminate colour from painting, and yet stop short of monochrome. We know that monochrome is a legitimate and satisfactory convention, whether it is drawn or painted monochrome. In fact, a monochrome is only a drawing done with the brush instead of with the point. Now there is a type of painter, over-sensitive, and dimly conscious of not possessing a sense of colour, who jibs at colour, just as certain neurasthenics, who are wanting in a talent for life, jib at life. Both embrace a kind of negative quietism. It is the fashion to call both refined, whereas they are in reality sick. Carrière was of these. His work would have taken a higher rank had he frankly foresworn even the tiny dose of colour to which he still clung. If you look at the picture entitled *The Mother's Kiss*, the hollow evocation in decadent form would have remained at least harmonious and consistent but for the intrusion of the odious pink tone which invades the province of colour only to utter a blasphemy on the immutable laws of harmony.

It is interesting to be able to turn round in this same Octagon Gallery to Vincent Van Gogh's portrait of a Zouave. Here we have the sane well-balanced grip of the born painter, the real unmistakable scratch of the lion's paw, what they call in French "*la griffe.*" The accident that this sane talent lodged in a brain that broke down is one of the ironic mysteries of fate, and in no way touches any critical contention. Every stroke in this picture expresses fact and form. The thing is said aloud in ringing tones, like the speech of an old farmer, or a line in a comedy of Goldoni. It has all the stimulus and snap of the crack of a whip or the shot of a rifle. These are the real men, and even I can dimly apprehend it, though I belong to a generation that has been debilitated by art-shades and terrorized by Mr. McColl. To me the treatment of the white background appears, I confess, what is called in the nursery "rather rude." I believe that Gore, Gilman, and Ginner contemplate it without flinching. And after all red is red, and be damned!

What a life-story in Gauguin's portrait of his painter-friend in the unending list slippers, and family, in the blank depressing studio, all north-light, at £12 a year! How humbly and honestly he bows, and rubs his hands, and recommends himself to your goodwill, your connoisseurship, or your charity, he does not much mind which, so long as the little family are fed and the rent and the colourman paid. No amphibious *arriviste* here, half-gentleman, half-artist, with a West-end tailor, *liaisons*, and three clubs! One cannot say that there is not progress in taste when these good things are yearly more understood and appreciated. How much road our eyes have made is evident in the manner we have left the virtuosity of Stevens behind us. How *démodé* is this *peinture pour cocottes* with its stale frocks, its bit of bric-a-brac, and the immobility of its fixed figures in the eternal vacuum of the pretentious studio.

We turn in the younger generation to Vuillard and Maurice Denis, who represent the two opposing tendencies between which art has ever balanced. Vuillard seems to have convened to stay his hand at the moment when he feels the freshness of his first impression fade. His sense of colour is exquisite. It is almost as if he said "I am so utterly concerned that you shall attend alone to the refinements of colour that I can show you, that I shall

purposely retain in my form a certain rudimentary quality, an almost purposed negligence that you may, if you will, put down to childish incapacity." This in his easel pictures from nature; though, in his elaborated decorations, his capacity for complicated construction is unmistakably proclaimed.

In Maurice Denis I see one of several types of what one might call "The complete Modern." It pleases him to create a somewhat more concentrated world than the one we live in, but he observes, in creating it, the rules of the exactest realism. He seems to me to attain to the highest type of plastic drawing. Not only does he realize form with perfection, but it is form as it is lived, which is a very different thing from form as it is bottled in the studio or the museum. His gracious damsels move their marble limbs in the sunlight in obedience to the varied impulses of shyness, haste, or playfulness with an eloquence that is astonishing. To be able to say of an art that it is a lively classic, or that it is an art of naturalness is, I suppose, the highest possible praise.

And now, having commented on some of the guests of the International, I have left myself no room to express the admiration I feel for some of the hosts. But whose fault is that? Mr. Francis Howard's.

In my contribution of last month to these columns, by a slip of the pen I wrote Prudhon for Proudhon, although I knew the difference between Prudhon the painter and J. B. Proudhon the publicist, author of *La Justice* and *La Pornocratie, ou les femmes dans les temps modernes*, without which no feminist's library can be said to be quite complete.

Play of the Month.

Rutherford and Son.

THE critics and experts are fond of descanting upon the technique of the theatre and its difficulties, but in reality technique is of very secondary importance, and is almost entirely dependent on the inherent interest of the matter presented. In *Rutherford and Son* (Little Theatre, to be transferred to the Vaudeville) the author, Miss Sowerby, has astonished London by her play, which in many ways is the most virile work we have seen for some years. It has the intense quality of *Chains*, by Miss Baker. Doors open, people come and go naturally, the curtains are excellent; there is continuity, a logical climax, an almost Grecian atmosphere of inevitable tragedy—and yet this is Miss Sowerby's first play. After all it is the stuff that matters. She had something real and dramatic to say, unlike the generality of our plays, which are written more often by technicians than by dramatists. The thing interests in the manner of an Ibsen play. The sense of the stage disappears. One becomes absorbed in this dour North-Country household, dominated by the iron and brutal personality of the Master, whose whole idea and activity are concentrated upon Rutherford. At once the atmosphere is Brontë-esque. An utter monotony of existence, utter dreariness of the unmarried daughter, an afternoon son of a curate, a somewhat clever, but slack-baked son chafing under his father's dominion, with his young wife, who is the one non-member of the family.

Not exactly the material for a play one might think, yet quite the contrary as it turns out. One by one the home breaks up. The curate first—he hopes to better himself; then the rebellious son, who, finding that his father refuses to "pay a price" for the discovery of white metal that he has tumbled upon, breaks open the cash-box and decamps, leaving his wife and their only son behind. Then the Master hears that his daughter has been

"carrying on" with his trusty foreman, from whom, with characteristic brutality, he obtains the secret of his son's discovery. He turns the girl out—never to darken his door again. At last he finds himself alone with the young wife. He begins to bully her—he finds a business woman.

Rutherford is his sole life's concern. His sons have left him. Only this little chap remains. The wife makes a bargain. He is to house and educate her son for ten years, after which time the boy shall be his to train up in the works, to carry on the business in the name of Rutherford. In this brutal *milieu* the figure of the Master stands out strangely fascinating, because he alone is the strong man, the creator. The author does not intrude herself. It is impossible to gather whether she sympathizes with the weak, brow-beaten and mutinous family, or with the father who is the principle of industry. All the characters are differentiated, and their acts spring logically from their conditions. It is a terrible home, no doubt quite typical of our great labour centres, where the hardness of steel seems to have driven out the humanity. The play is a real achievement in matter and expression. It is admirably played, in particular by Mr. Norman McKinnel as the Master and Miss May Olive as the daughter. S. O.

Books of the Month

ESSAYS AND GENERAL LITERATURE

THE TRUE TRAVELLER. By W. H. DAVIES. Duckworth. 6*s.*

Mr. Davies is here giving us further reminiscences such as he gave in *Beggars* and *The Autobiography of a Super-Tramp*. There is here no continuous narrative, as there was in the latter, nor an analysis of the begging fraternity such as was given in the former. But he has written down stray recollections which remain vividly impressed on his mind, loosely grouping them together as subject and circumstance permit. He tells his inimitable stories with the same directness as before; in the same droll, naive manner, describing tramps, beggars, casual labourers, courtesans, in the spirit of simple acceptance of facts, whatever they may be, without ever obtruding a middle or upper class criticism. He himself has been a beggar, a tramp, a labourer; he has frequented common lodging-houses; he has encountered queer customers on a footing of equality. He writes about them as if he were still one of them—as if the "true traveller's" profession was still a legitimate one for him. He describes all the "dodges" for getting money out of unwily, sympathetic ones, without concealing the part he himself took. He retails the talk of the wayside camp, of the streets, and the public-house. With the same simple vividness he describes many individual rascals: the religious tramp, who throughout a long life had combined begging with a sanctimonius insistence on his faith and his expectation of Paradise; the foul-mouthed beggar who confessed to a mission audience sins which he had never committed, and won a rich widow for the reward of his penitence; the tramp who thought he was the Duke of M—, and a score of others.

Mr. Davies writes in a style which no description would serve to suggest. It may owe something to the literature of the Bible. As one reads his remarkable English, one thinks of devotional writers such as William Penn and Bunyan rather than those who have written of strange travels, like George Borrow. Simple lyrical poetry, too, has always been his companion. But, after all, the matter of his style comes from the vernacular. It is largely made up of those short, easy words such as one might use in talking to the men of a lodging-house. This direct, masculine, unspoilt language is ready to his hand, and his intimacy with literature has enabled him to put the words together and shape them. But whatever the mechanism may be, the result is unique. With the restraint and sufficiency of his language he has produced literature of a remarkable order.

PLAY-MAKING: A MANUAL OF CRAFTSMANSHIP. By WILLIAM ARCHER. Chapman & Hall 7*s.* 6*d.* net.

Mr. Archer is certainly brave or untechnical at his craft when he begins a book of three hundred odd pages on the art of play-making with the flat announcement that "there are no rules for writing a play." But he is right. This Scottish honesty delights us. We read his book on the strength of that statement. On the whole, we agree with him that his mission is educational rather than creative. Of omissions there are some flagrant ones. Practically nothing is said about Synge—incomparably the greatest dramatist we have had for the last fifty years. There is too much about Pinero, Henry A. Jones, too little about Maugham. Perhaps more could be explained by quotations from scenes. None the less, Mr. Archer is useful, with a sly wit at times, and the tyro will find in these pages a mine of valuable information and suggestion. On Ibsen Mr. Archer is always good. He sees rightly. His experience is vast. His enthusiasm is real. He is

a sure guide, so far as is humanly possible. If his book will never make a man write a good play, it can point out many things that a dramatist should know. But its chief use will be to the public, who cannot fail to derive right canons about an art which we, in England, still relegate to the plane of entertainment.

THE SUFFRAGETTE. By C. PANKHURST. Gay & Hancock. 6*s.* net.
WOMAN'S SUFFRAGE. By Mrs. M. G. FAWCETT, LL.D. T. & E. C. Jack. 6*d.* net.
THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A WORKING WOMAN. By ADELHEID POPP. Fisher Unwin 3*s.* 6*d.*

The essence of the woman's movement is embodied in these three books, and orm an excellent co-ordination whereby one is able to judge the merits of their case from three different standpoints. Miss Pankhurst, in the exuberance of the younger woman, writes a wonderful record of a wonderful movement. One's breath is exhausted by the sheer continuity of the enthusiasm: the book begins on a note of ecstasy and ends with a crashing chord. Imprisonment, forced feeding, and rough handling, which would soon damp the ardour of most men, only increase their enthusiasm. The value of the work is in its graphic record of the militant movement, and is more readable and exciting than many novels. Mrs. Fawcett, as representing the non-militant suffragettes, provides a quieter and more reasoned statement of women's claims. Her arguments are clear and well sustained, and it would be difficult to find a more compact statement of their case. This little book of eighty-nine pages is one of a series of "The People's Books," worthy of support as an honest effort to provide instructive reading at a minimum cost. Many a "saxpence" should go bang in the purchase thereof. Mrs. Popp's autobiography portrays the struggles of a working woman to earn an honest living under circumstances which are common to many of the bourgeois—a choice between semi-starvation and immorality. The fact that women have to face ordeals such as those portrayed by Mrs. Popp is in itself a justification for some feminist claims. As a sociological study it is worthy of perusal.

FICTION

THE PRELUDE TO ADVENTURE. By HUGH WALPOLE. Mills & Boon. 6*s.*

I cannot help regretting that Mr. Walpole did not think of and write this *Prelude to Adventure* before some most fortunate inspiration gave him the theme of *Mr. Perrin and Mr. Traill.* Criticism and comparison would then have been so easy and so agreeable. One would have said that this extremely clever and promising young writer, having written a remarkable and interesting novel, had gone on to write one much more interesting and remarkable; had found a subject, at once fresh and familiar, exactly fitted to his gifts of patient analysis and of expressing an atmosphere; had found himself and come into his own, and all that. Unfortunately the more interesting book came first. The careful critic, however, is by no means compelled to reverse what he would have said. There is no falling off in any sense which should disappoint those who hoped great things of Mr. Walpole. Grasp of subject, delicacy of perception and expression, power of bringing an atmosphere home to the reader—all this is just as apparent as before. Only the subject is not so good, not nearly so good: that is all. The tragedy of an inferior schoolmaster's life, with the gradual warping of a naturally decent temperament, the narrow jealousies growing intenser, the continually exacerbated nerves, ending in madness, was a fine tragedy. It took one for the first time—at least so far as my own reading is concerned—behind certain scenes, into the real humanity of a rather despised and insignificantly obvious figure. The story of a young man who kills another by accident and is gradually driven to confess has no such interest. It would not have, even if one altogether believed in it, and that for my part I cannot do. Consider. Olva Dune is a proud and contemptuous youth—a little too much so for my sympathies—of a proud and contemptuous race, but is on the whole a sane and sensible young man. Very good. He meets another lad in a lonely wood, quarrels with him, and, in a fit of quite justified rage, hits him as hard as he can on the chin, and the blow kills him. Now, both Dune and Mr. Walpole

treat this unfortunate fatality as though it was murder, in the same degree as if he had out with a knife and stabbed the other boy. That is really absurd, and I do not believe this clear-headed and courageous youth would have taken it so for a moment. He would have recognised that he had had very bad luck, as though he had killed somebody by accident at footer or in the ring—a piece of bad luck which no doubt would overshadow his early manhood, but which was not unbearable, especially as he did not really repent the death of the other, who was a blackguard. And he would have gone at once and said what he had done, and there would have been no story. Given this (as I think) initial improbability, the rest is finely worked out. The emotional form which the desire of confession takes is a matter of temperament, and to me the sense of an outside Presence—God, in fact—continually prompting confession is not so closely imaginable as the other motive, a feeling of intense loneliness in the possession of a damning secret. That is good, and so is the idea of his suddenly confessing to a fool, the worst confidant he could have had. As for the atmosphere, it is less interesting than that of the masters' common room at the inferior public school. Undergraduates may be often very jolly companions, but the only psychological interest in very young men is in an emotional phase for which the University gives no scope, and which therefore is rightly omitted in the novel. (Dune's love for a friend's sister is little more than common form.) Such as it is, the life of the undergraduates is exactly pictured—by no means a matter of course merely because Mr. Walpole is happily near his own experience of it. Had there been no Mr. Perrin this successor would have been acclaimed more warmly, less unequivocally. Hard luck? I think not. It is a small price to pay for such a rare inspiration as that.

G. S. S.

THE CHARWOMAN'S DAUGHTER. By JAMES STEPHENS. Macmillan. 3*s.* 6*d.* net.

The story of Mary Makebelieve, the daughter of the indomitable charwoman, from childhood to the dawn of womanhood, is simply life in a day-dream. It is, however, so vividly realised by the poet of *Insurrections* and *The Lonely God* that we are carried along breathlessly as we follow through a luminous haze the development of the dreamy child under the stimulus of her awestricken admiration for the big policeman who controls the traffic in a main street. Indeed, one is tempted to parody Rossetti's remark about Emily Brontë's novel—"The scene is laid in Hell, but with English place-names"—and to say of it that the scene is laid in the heaven of an ardent youth with place-names borrowed from Dublin. Mary's adventures—real adventures, although she often returns from her daily walks through the streets or in Phœnix Park without having spoken to a soul—are full of the material of fine poetry, often seemingly on the point of crystallisation, though without any intrusion of the rhythm of verse. This quality, together with the close and delicate observation of the fatuous policeman in his obsession for the half-child, half-woman, and the mingled attraction and repulsion which she feels for him after flying from his sudden and brutal embrace, is worthy of a poet like Mr. Stephens. He is throughout delightful in his characterisation of the passionately devoted mother, who gladly sacrifices herself for her child, and whose sole joy lies in dreaming dreams for her future. There are, indeed, so many good things in this first volume of fiction by Mr. Stephens, which, by the way, closes with an exultant hymn of characteristically bellicose optimism, that we are justified in looking forward to still better work from him in this direction.

JOSEPH IN JEOPARDY. By FRANK DANBY. Methuen. 6*s.*

In this not very appropriately named story the author has succeeded in drawing both "smart" and suburban society from the most unpleasing point of view obtainable. The main theme of the book is as old as that suggested by the title, failing to resemble it in that Dennis Passiful, the "Joseph," is a married man and Lady Diana Wayne who enslaves and nearly entraps him, is a widow. The treatment of this well-worn theme is undoubtedly clever, even fresh, and the calm unexaggerated English in which it is set forth is something of a pleasure, but the three principal characters are all unconvincing sooner or later. Dennis' rapid and complete change of feeling towards his wife, which there is no change in her to

justify, is the weakest spot in the book. Mabel, the dull good-intentioned wife is so admirably and remorselessly drawn that it makes the conclusion more incredible than it would have been if Mabel had been less clearly shown as without possibilities. Lady Diana is necessarily a complete contrast to her unconscious rival, and here the type is less true to life than fiction. She is no new thing in sirens—her eyes are green, her gowns cling to her, and she burns oriental pastilles in her boudoir. The minor characters, almost without exception unpleasant, are portrayed with far greater fidelity to life. Dennis himself, around whom the action of the book moves, gives a curious impression of being a different kind of person to that which his creator intended. He is presented as a Galahad—the "Immaculate Exception" as Cosmo calls him—but the force of the Galahad character is never his; the reader is left with the feeling that Dennis was one of those men whom ordinary natural instincts urge towards the goal but with whom a certain conscientious fastidiousness, very different from a passionate purity, cheats of attainment at the last. If the domestic bliss which engulfs Dennis and Mabel in the final chapter is credible at all, it is so on the hypothesis that Dennis, the beautiful cricket-playing, idealistic young man was really nothing after all but the male complement to Mabel—more prone to vagrant impulses, but a trifle dull and above everything "nice." And whatever the faults or excellencies of this book, neither of the last two epithets can be said to apply to it.

THE VICTORIES OF OLIVIA. By EVELYN SHARP. Macmillan & Co. 6*s*.

The nine short stories in this volume may be described as eminently for the *jeune fille*. Unlike old-fashioned literature of that description, the ideas here presented are not by any means limited to matrimony. Indeed, Miss Sharp strikes the note of the new feminism with a somewhat insistent hand, light as it is. In the first story, from which the book takes its title, the author skilfully evades the obvious conclusion that would have prevailed twenty years ago, yet when bereft of this rather aggressively bright spirit of Woman with a capital W, the main theme is the evergreen one of a man and a governess. One is left wishing that Miss Sharp had had the courage of her cleverness and defiantly borne her pretty governess to marriage with the son of the house—so few writers are brave enough to be conventional that it would have been something of a *tour de force*. One or two of the stories, notably 'Peggy and the Engineer Man' are overlong for the simple guilelessness of manner and matter, and much the best thing in the book is a series of three little reminiscences of childhood. They have truth and atmosphere, and anyone whose own childhood was darkened—as whose was not?—by such theories as that to drink while you were hot "brought you out in a rash" and that playing with other children made you "catch something," will read these sketches with the pleasure everyone feels in checking someone else's experience by his own.

SHARROW. By BARONESS VON HUTTEN. Hutchinson. 6*s*.

At last we have a vindication of red-haired Sandy—carrots, as we call them at school, though not always to their faces, as these red-haired youths are not uncommonly sturdy fellows, stubborn, pugilistic, and British. Baroness von Hutten has evidently enjoyed her type, and Sharrow is the "life narrative" of just such a one whose congenital failing is brandy. The Baroness is not of the Bennett school in her delineation of character and psychology—oddly enough few women are—they are surface artists, so to speak, whereas Conrad, for example, is essentially a reflex painter. But in her manner the Baroness is very strong and entertaining, very observant, very caustic, very penetrating. Her own commentaries are always witty and pertinent. She draws ruthlessly too. This Sandy is a keen, rather brutal, study of a type. And the author has succeeded. Quite a book to read. We recommend it cordially.

WINGS OF DESIRE. By M. P. WILLCOCKS. Lane. 6*s*.

Miss Willcocks is too lavish. She gives the impression of "showing off." We know how a fleet of anchored trawlers looks at night. Anyway, if we do not know, we shall not be helped by a comparison to fireflies caught in an invisible

net. Miss Willcocks makes us feel uncomfortable, as if we were fending off a too pressing hostess, and at the same time ungracious in declining the superfluous dainties. Miss Willcocks is obviously sincere: therefore we resent her liability to an imputation of insincerity. She certainly knows the value of words: therefore we are shocked to see them sometimes lying about. But Miss Willcocks possesses the true spirit of creative effort, and when she fails, she fails gloriously: therefore we shall continue to look forward to her next book.

THE FAMILY LIVING. By E. H. LACON WATSON. Murray. 6*s*.

The well-written chronicle of a young man's doubts and fears and determinations. Possibly the clerical theme is responsible for the flavour of Anthony Trollope, so pleasantly aromatic. Mr. Lacon Watson has the happy gift of knowing his limitations, and therefore since his psychology avoids the great deep, he achieves an accurate survey of the coast. We enjoyed *The Family Living* as one enjoys a Sunday call with its chastened rumours of the great world.

IN THE WEST WIND. By A. B. LE SAGE. Duckworth. 6*s*.

The dialect of Cornwall has been carefully reproduced; the colours of Western moors and skies and mires have been properly announced; no tourist's folly affronts the Cornishman; the story is reasonable. But, because the manner refuses to modulate itself to the matter, or because emotion never inspired execution, something is absent. Mr. Le Sage has seen Cornwall, and he may have felt it; but he cannot make us feel it. Therefore his twilights are not magical and his days are dull. *In the West Wind* is too gentle. Next time we hope Mr. Le Sage will see that the storm cone is flying. And we are anxious for another attempt. To most Cornish novelists we feel disposed to recommend the Norfolk Broads as a holiday resort.

IN COTTON WOOL. By W. B. MAXWELL. Hutchinson. 6*s*.

Mr. Maxwell 'dopes' his readers. This is not to say he sends them to sleep. On the contrary he interests them overwhelmingly; he stimulates their appetite for inquisitiveness and flogs their fancy, while all the time their reason, their knowledge, and their imagination are gradually rendered unconscious. In his latest book, the author announces his belief that egotism is the great curse of modern life. In order to point his moral, Mr. Maxwell takes a congenital idiot, and, after 'doping' his readers so that they accept him as a type of contemporary humanity, leaves his hero gibbering in an asylum. We cannot say we found *In Cotton Wool* tragic or even depressing: Lenny Calcraft is too essentially an exception. But that the book is interesting, that it is hard to put aside, that it often possesses marvellous atmosphere, few will deny.

POETRY

MOODS, SONGS, AND DOGGERELS. By JOHN GALSWORTHY. Heinemann. 5*s*. net.

It is by no means an easy task to attempt to form an unbiased judgment of a first book of verse by an author who already enjoys a solid and secure reputation as a writer of prose. Are we to look to the work for promise or achievement? Are we, for instance, to regard these light songs of Mr. Galsworthy's as the first ripples of an upgathering or the froth of a breaking wave? The book itself gives us little clue. Few of the poems are explicitly dated, though many of them bear the marks of immaturity. On the other hand, several of the pieces, notably 'Persia Moritura,' can only have been written during the last few months: so that it would seem that the volume is a garland of many years' gathering, claiming, therefore, consideration according to its positive, rather than its potential achievement. But we shall make no pretence of pronouncing a verdict unprejudiced by the poet's past.

In *Moods, Songs, and Doggerels*, then, we find many of the qualities—a grave sincerity, an austere ardour, a restraint of speech—that we have come to expect of Mr. Galsworthy: and yet we feel little of the zest of creation in the work. In metre, Mr. Galsworthy moves stiffly, self-consciously, and with evident difficulty. We are always aware that he is working in an unaccustomed medium which he cannot shape to his own uses. A master in prose, in verse he is something of the amateur, and so unable to keep clear altogether of the makeshift devices, the stock conceits, the loves and doves of conventional poetical jargon. There is, indeed, a deal of stuff in this volume which would damage the reputation of a mere poet who had no prose achievement to fall back upon. And how little did we dream that we should ever be called upon to charge Mr. Galsworthy with the vice of writing prettily!

We have, of course, a bee in our bonnet that buzzes protestingly at the hint of any overt didacticism in a work of art. Yet perhaps the most notable of these poems is the first in the volume, 'A Dream,' in which the poet arraigns the Almighty of the theologians (rather after the manner of Mr. Hardy, though less sententiously and with a happier sequel): and the most certain achievement of them all is a frankly didactic "doggerel" near the end—'The Devon Sage.' Between these two pieces come a number of trifles in various moods, light-hearted or sad, songs of a brave spirit to whom courage is the supreme virtue.

> Laws give it not; before it prayer will blush;
> Hope has it not; nor pride of being true;
> 'Tis the mysterious soul which never yields,
> But hales us on and on to breast the rush
> Of all the fortunes we shall happen through.
> And when Death calls across his shadowy fields—
> Dying, it answers: "Here! I am not dead!"

Yet, though the volume contains much that must appeal to Mr. Galsworthy's admirers, we scarcely think the book, as a whole, has a sufficient purpose, artistic or ethical. And remembering *Strife* and *Justice*, and the other unforgettable achievements in prose, we miss the white-heat of creative energy, the certainty of touch, the passionate precision, and conclude that Mr. Galsworthy the dramatist has little need to fear the rivalry of Mr. Galsworthy the poet.

PLAYS FOR AN IRISH THEATRE. By W. B. YEATS. With designs by GORDON CRAIG. A. H. Bullen, Shakespeare Head Press. 8*s.* 6*d.* net.

There are many who will be glad to have these plays collected together thus. They have hitherto been scattered in a diversity of separate editions, or gathered together in the second, third, and fourth volumes of the costly Collected Edition. The plays from the second volume, *Countess Cathleen*, *Land of Heart's Desire*, and *Unicorn from the Stars*, are omitted. But to this collection Mr. Yeats has given a Preface in which he treats of Tragedy and Comedy in words that throw a new critical idea before us—an idea that, the more one thinks on it, should be of considerable service in the reawakening of Drama (as distinguished from Theatrical Entertainment) that so many are hoping for. "I think," he says, "it was while rehearsing a translation of *Les Fourberies de Scapin* in Dublin, and noticing how passionless it all was, that I saw what should have been plain from the first line I had written, that Tragedy must always be a drowning and breaking of the dykes that separate man from man, and that it is upon these dykes Comedy keeps house." It matters little that something like it, or unlike it, was written by Congreve, and, being read by Mr. Yeats, lived on like an unobtrusive guest in the house of his memory. Whencesoever it came, it is a penetrating thought, and it is as happily stated as conceived. He proceeds to remind us that at the high moments of Tragedy the tragic hero comes near to us—we live intimately and exaltedly with him, as he with us—whereas in Comedy we thrust away the comic person far from us the better to see him or her, since it is the perception of those things that distinguish him or her from ourselves that constitutes the comic element. Mr. Yeats is too wise and tentative in his thinking to state this in all the crudeness of the deductions that may be drawn from it. He does, nevertheless, seem to imply in certain paragraphs of this preface—and the constant impression left on the reading mind remains that his thought is—that the tragic

hero is less a vital personality than an attribute, and that it is in the domain of comedy the playwright should rather restrict his efforts to create personality. It would seem, for example, that to him Lear was less a man than an outraged father, and Pistol a moving and distinct personality. Seen thus, how true it is! But shift the points a little. Is it not equally possible to say that Pistol is less a man than a braggart swash-buckler, and that the tragedy of Lear consists in a deep wrong done to, or brought about by, a man whose personal greatness has won us? It all depends on what personality means. And that is a matter that the mystic and the wise thinker and passionate singer have to unfold in the coming years. It is true to say, though it may sound like a paradox, that when I most truly sympathise with another I most truly realise myself and the fulness of my own soul. Yet the central idea remains that when we sorrow or are exalted we sorrow and are exalted *with*, and when we laugh we laugh *against*. And that is a thought that should be of service in the Drama. It should, for instance, help to solve the perplexity of prose or poetry as the most adequate medium for dramatic expression.

SURVIVALS. By R. CHARLES MOIR. Elkin Mathews. 1*s.* net.

POEMS. By W. E. LUTYENS. Elkin Mathews. 2*s.* 6*d.* net.

VERSES. By AGNES FOX. Elkin Mathews. 1*s.* net.

SAINT BRIDE OF THE FLAME AND OTHER VERSES. Fifield. 1*s.* 6*d.* net.

STORM SONG AND OTHER POEMS. By PALLISTER BARKAS. Elkin Mathews. 2*s.*

EIDOLA. By DONALD J. OVERY. Nutt.

MILESTONES: SONGS FROM AN OLD HOUSE. By MARCIA KNIGHT. Constable. 3*s.* 6*d.* net.

THE NUN OF KENT, a Drama in Five Acts. By GRACE DENIO LITCHFIELD. G. P. Putnam's Sons. 3*s.* 6*d.* net.

POEMS OF THE NORTH. By H. F. BRETT BRETT-SMITH. Oxford: B. H. Blackwell

NENUPHAR, THE FOURFOLD FLOWER OF LIFE. By HARRIET L. CHILDE-PEMBERTON. Arthur L. Humphreys. 3*s.* 6*d.*

THE MASQUE OF THE ELEMENTS. By HERMAN SCHEFFAUER. Dent. 2*s.* net.

QUIET PLACES. Poems by CARLOS WUPPERMANN. New York: Shaemas O'Sheel, Publisher of Books in Good Taste, 124, West Nineteenth Street.

DISCORDS. By DONALD EVANS. Philadelphia: Brown Brothers.

An ungracious critic would say that *Survivals* bids fair to justify its name. It reveals moods of rather frowsy contemplation grandiloquently expressed *à la* Beattie; few, indeed, are the pages not saturated with suggestions of heavenly things, supreme purposes, and such-like survivals of that didactic teleology which we thought had gone the way of the dodo. But two or three poems at the end, dealing with 'Throne and Empire' are quite up to date. Odd, this neurasthenic recrudescence of monarchical gush in old England, this spectacular and rowdy-dowdy cult of royalty, which the author voices efficiently in 'The Solent.' It belongs to the category of Mafeking night and those other national psychopathies concerning which Prof. Bright has sagely discoursed.

There is a good deal of bathos and false sentiment, too, in the *Poems* of W. E. Lutyens.

> Ye birds! give me your throats.....
> For I would sing! No voice
> Have I, but thoughts enough
> I have to make your noise
> An art, and I would stuff
> Your bulging throats with such a shout
> That, though day rules, stars would rush out.

No, this will hardly do, and the last state of that poem—'The God-Man with his Urim and Thummim'—is worse than the first. How the modernized Jew must laugh at our Gothic affection for those quaint and disreputable yarns of old Israel, which he himself has long ago outgrown!

Unpretentious are Miss Fox's *Verses*, and deficient in that geniality of the commonplace which makes Eliza Cooke endurable. They allude, for the most

part, to hazy meetings and leave-takings, veiled under climatic allegories of sunshine, rain, and so forth. We question whether a reader can be warmed with such vague and humdrum yearnings. He must have preciser images, if his sympathies are to be enlisted and the verses are to echo in his heart. Altogether one wonders why people who have practically nothing to tell the world should thus publicly analyse, in querulous detachment, certain private little affairs of their own, but there! one often wonders at things.

And unpretentious, likewise, is *Saint Bride of the Flame*, a slim volume dealing with hackneyed subjects in the orthodox gentlemanly fashion. The first verses of some of the poems read so much better than the last, that we think the anonymous author would have been well advised to write them backwards, seeing that it is the last word which, alas! is apt to stick in one's memory.

The author of *Storm Song and Other Poems* seems to be at the enviable age when concrete images have still to be precipitated from a fermenting mass of ideals. No harm in this if, as in the present case, the ingredients of the mixture have been judiciously chosen. He is impressionable, truthful, and justifiably insubordinate. The prognosis is good. We should say that he was in the way of carving out not only respectable verses but a sound philosophy of life.

Eidola is maturer stuff. It is a relief to come across a man like Mr. Overy who feels sanely, thinks for himself, and writes good verses at the same time. His 'Insomnia,' and the Swedenborgian vision of 'The Way of Life,' and many others, are original and interesting, while the love-songs, such as those on pp. 34 and 36 have clothed themselves in straight-forward poetic language, very different from the nebulous sex-twaddle to which we have lately been accustomed. No doubt Mr. Max Nordau, on reading the artfully contrived 'Skylark,' and 'Garden in Arden,' would mutter the ominous word *Echolalie*. But, thank goodness, Max Nordau is hopelessly out of date.

Mrs. Knight's poems—*Milestones*—are tinged with a pleasing wistfulness, and their subjects mostly drawn from the externals of nature and of child-life; an agreeable feature in this age of ego-centric bards. The study on 'Colour' is noteworthy, as proving how difficult it is, despite the clearest language, to gain a vision of colour in landscape from verbal description.

> Tall white cliffs, an emerald hill,
> A red flag flying free,
> Swift grey birds which roam at will
> And brown boats on the sea.

After a verse or two of this, the tints, enumerated one by one, begin to blot each other out on the mental retina—they are *superimposed*, and a mere blur is the result. Take now a more elaborate tableau—say a sunset by J. A. Symonds—and the feat of visualization becomes almost impossible. The actual picture exists only for the writer; do what he will, his reader soon finds himself lapped in a vague and sensuous colour-dream.

Another "Nature-Study" deals with 'The Earwig'—an unpromising theme one would think. We applaud the attempt, marred though it is by three sad blemishes. After all, the presentation of such small deer in attractive verse is a task of real artistry, and full of traps for the unwary. To treat an earwig *con amore*, in throbbing couplets, seizing upon his poetic essentials and connotations while leaving a faithful portrait of the plain beast he is; to conjure up an earwig harmonious, lovable, but true to nature; an earwig with tail-forceps tremblingly alert and yet imperishable as bronze, an earwig that will live; this requires a good deal more than loving observation and a gift for verse; it requires insight, almost inspiration. First and foremost, there must be no intrusion of that pathetic fallacy which sometimes taints Miss Knight's poems. And then, the proper distance (no microscopes!), the humble but sympathetic environment, duly subordinated to the central figure—h'm.

The *Nun of Kent*, a drama in five acts, shows the worldly uses to which an artificial mystic can be put. In this case, a rough peasant girl, the saintly Elizabeth, is an instrument shaped by certain monks of Canterbury for gratifying their own ambitions—the dethronement of King Henry VIII., and the establishment of a catholic régime in England. The conspirators all perish, for the plot is revealed by Elizabeth's early lover, Cuthbert (an unconvincing figure), who has

heard of it from her own lips during an improbable moonlight interview, and thinks that duty to his sovereign outweighs sentimental considerations. The lines read well; the monks, such as Dering and Bocking, are plausible persons, and the priest-manufactured *ecstatica* acts and talks rather better than one might expect her to do.

The scholarly *Poems of the North* are drawn from a variety of sources; some are of Scandinavian flavour ('Night in Valhalla' is a suggestive little piece), and this revived interest in northern lore is a good sign—a sign of healthy feeling. The hate-song on p. 38 is refreshingly bestial in its invective. It warms the cockles of one's heart to come across a minstrel who seems to have preserved his primordial outfit of choler. "O! fiercer fathers, turn we unto you." By all means.

To utilize the title of *Nenuphar, the Fourfold Flower of Life*, for a cycle of songs on earth, water, air, and fire, is not a bad idea. But the authoress, we fear, has no great love of the *Elementargeister;* she cares little for their significance in the Cosmos, their natural beauties, their mysterious and elvish lore. She can discover in their four venerable names nothing better than a peg whereon to hang certain introspective cravings of no particular "elemental" import, and couched, moreover, in language that is apt to border on the inane:

> "Spheres of coloured music borne on vivid wings."

One of the stanzas in this book consists of fifty-nine words, of which only six contain more than one syllable. This is a pretty good record, even for our sensible English language.

Among the obvious inconveniences of such a threnody as *The Masque of the Elements* (which deals with the spirit of chaos, the sun, the planet earth, and other sublime objects) is this: that all parallels drawn from merely terrestrial concepts mar its primal dignity. To compare certain astral bodies to kings and queens—well, it is the best that can be done, no doubt, but in our opinion these august shapes should be left to perform their appointed revolutions without metaphors of this kind. The author's fluency, often felicitous, is sometimes too glib for the gravity of the problem:—

> Hail! vessels solar and terrestrial, hail!
> Whose prows shall cross the dim celestial bars
> With helm sidereal and cloudy sail,
> Bannered with youth and lanterned with the stars.

None the less, there is a smack of grandeur in this poem; its construction is of the simplest, the characters are few, clearly portrayed, and wholly unsententious. It does one good to escape awhile, with Mr. Scheffauer, from our murky and all-too-human atmosphere into the crystal spaces of the empyrean.

From the Cosmos to New York is no great leap, and here is Mr. Carlos Wuppermann, whose love of Jesus and of pretty girls reminds us uncommonly of the American writer noticed in the February number of this Review (p. 556). He has now produced in *Quiet Places* some remarkably disordered and trivial stuff. How is this for novelty of idea and lilt of versification?

> Nothing in the world is as refreshing as the soul of a friend;
> Nothing in the world is as beautiful as the soul of a pure woman.
> Now I am no longer afraid of anything—neither of life nor of death,
> For neither life nor death can take from me this one glorious fact:
> I have looked into a woman's soul!

Discords, by Donald Evans, contains a considerable output of poems. Despite their attractive titles, they are even more chaotic in form and sentiment. The author is consistent only in his admiration of the *Ewig-weibliche:*

> O! keen clean limbs. O! little sweet fleet feet!
> O! bright white thighs that are love's resting-place!

and in his lack of the sense of rhythm, which is quite a phenomenon:

> Willowy Placide with her cool kind hands
> Clasping the marvel of her oval face.....
> She fills the teacups with the faintest trace
> Of a smile to tell how she understands.

The song on p. 51 epitomizes several of his defects; we would defy anyone to restore page 70 into its original verse, if printed as prose.

But a really noteworthy feature of these two transatlantic bards is their all-pervading insincerity. Theirs is not the pseudo-insincerity, the delightfully-incongruous dreaming, of adolescence, much less the systematic and urbane make-belief of the rococo; it is an artificiality so uncompromising and lawless, so ferociously-masculine and yet childish, that it may be said—on this side of the water at least—to strike a new note in literature. Viewed as poetry these outpourings are quite dreadful; as documents, as the residue of a certain social alchemy, they fascinate us with a kind of shuddering interest. By what strange process have the authors reached this (literary) point of view, how have they come by that *enveloping medium* through which not the simplest impressions of an outer world may pass without being distorted into something monstrous or frivolous?

Their aspirations are summed up in a dare-devil way of seizing the English tongue by the throat and bidding it stand and deliver (grammar and prosody being scalped *en passant*) in the vigorous words of Mr. Evans:—

> That I must do I but begin to trace,
> Yet I feel I have lived a lifetime now;
> And when worlds crack and crashing scream through space
> It crushes, overwhelms my pallid brow,
> To the world's heart I must get, blow by blow.

We wish him joy of his journey, hoping that an austere self-chastisement and an eye firm fixed upon true beauty and the actualities of life may soon resolve his *Discords* into something more harmonious.

THE WHIRLPOOL. By ETHEL ARCHER. London, Wieland & Co. 1*s.* net.

This is a whirlpool, and no mistake; a witches' cauldron wherein suns and stars and souls, and Lilith and Sappho, and "whispering hair," and corpses and poppies, jostle one another in a heaving brew of iridescent, quasi-putrescent ultra-modernity. Quite good reading, all the same. Take p. 44:—

> "Ah me! What serpent hisses from out those purple 'bysses."

And we must thank the mysterious V. B. N. for a really inspired line:—

> "Thou lyric laughter of the enfranchised Male."

The enfranchised Male—ha, ha! Excellent fooling, i' faith! The naughty new "male," smashing our windows with his inverted commas.....unless, indeed, as Mr. Aleister Crowley authoritatively hints in his sacerdotal preface, "abaaab= babbba and AaBCcAaBccAaBC."..... In *that* case, why, of course.....But the time, we think, is hardly ripe for such disclosures, although the more intelligent among us may have seen a certain Writing upon the Wall, setting forth, in clearest language, that 1+1=3.

N. D.

POLITICS

SOCIALISM AND CHARACTER. By VIDA D. SCUDDER. Dent. 5*s.* net.

When a writer indites her Preface from "this holy Tuscan mountain sanctified by the Passion of St. Francis, where brown-robed brothers move about in an exceeding peace among their peasant-friends and white sheep-flocks," it is easy to conclude that she is a native of the Great Republic of the West, which produces this particular kind of lyrical prose. Miss Scudder, who styles herself "a class-conscious revolutionary Socialist.....to whom none the less the spiritual harvest, the fruits of character, are the only results worth noting in any economic order," has read much, and discusses her subject under a great variety of aspects with unfailing brightness, fluency, and cheerful self-confidence; yet, while she has an astonishing supply of easy and picturesque phrases, such as that in which she speaks about "mistaken loyalties to causes of extinguished glory trailing their mournful light across the pages of history, as the rays of dead stars wander forever [*sic*] through space," we do not feel sensibly advanced as we turn her

pages. The ease with which she assigns to the great Christian dogmas of the Trinity, the Incarnation, and the Atonement their place "under Socialism" may irritate some readers who otherwise might be more or less prepared to share the author's standpoint. Where she convinces us least is in her attempt to save personal freedom and initiative while proclaiming the triumph of "economic determinism"; for if all economic development is strictly necessitated, how, in any real sense, is the individual free to contribute to that development? All this is not to say that Miss Scudder has not written an interesting book; the only question, considering the enormous number of publications on Socialism, is whether she has a sufficiently original and distinctive message to warrant its proclamation at the length of four hundred and thirty pages, and on that point her ingenuous avowal, "One writes to relieve one's mind," leaves us something less than assured.

TRAVEL

AN ARTIST IN CORFU. By SOPHIE ATKINSON. Herbert & Daniel. 18*s*.

Miss Atkinson is far more artist than author. One picture she has, not a view of anything in particular, but just a blue hazy sea seen through trees with the hot mountains of Albania in the distance, which makes me remember Corfu more vividly than all her ecstatic and formless prose. 'Almond Blossom' and the 'Tomato Market' are also good pictures, the rest I suspect have got sadly dulled in reproduction. Miss Atkinson fails especially in the picture of that Fortress Rock which makes the approach to Corfu a memorable event in the life of every æsthetic traveller. The uncoloured tail-piece sketches make one wish she had given us far more black and white, for there are not a quarter enough pictures in the book to satisfy the lover of Corfu.

As for the book itself, the best things are things quoted—prayers, old travellers, and so forth. The descriptions of the scenery are faithful, but the book is so formless that even the reader who knows Corfu is never quite sure where the artist is pushing her bicycle. And even a lady entirely ignorant of modern Greek might have got some one to tell her that it is unseemly to write Kyria Ki in two words, and that her servant's name was not Babadoni but Papa Antonius. Her inaccuracy generally is Herodotean; and I pity her if she used the Baedeker map which she reproduces anywhere in the vicinity of Arkadades. And she has little understanding or care for Corfu as anything but a show place; whereas it is a little island with fascinating political problems of its own to solve. And the great fundamental problem, whether it is better to be beautiful and dead or ugly and alive, she avoids, and in Corfu of all places the problem presses.

But if Miss Atkinson persuades any one to visit Corfu, the victim will forgive her anything. For Corfu, whatever it may be for Corfiotes, is for an Englishman a Paradise, to put it vulgarly, the like of which even the other side of the tideless sea cannot provide. JAMES ELROY FLECKER.

ABOUT ALGERIA. By CHARLES THOMAS-STANFORD, F.S.A. Lane. 5*s*. net.

Those who are acquainted with Algerian railways that crawl along at sixteen miles an hour will approve of Mr. Thomas-Stanford's method of traversing the country by motor, which, he rightly says, has increased fourfold our opportunities of observation. Not that his book gives one the impression of undue haste; it is, rather, a judicious and alluring *coup d'œil* of Algiers, Tlemcen, Constantine, Biskra, Timgad, and the wonderful mountain scenery of Khabylia, written by a man who appreciates their historical associations and natural beauties. While condemning the spirit of inconsiderate modernisation which has despoiled the monuments of ancient dominion in the land—how long will it take us to realise that ruins, duly preserved, are a commercial asset?—he is fully alive to the progress of French rule. They have built, for example, nearly ten thousand miles of road, and their wine export at present amounts to 150 million gallons a year. No bad record this, after eighty years' occupation. Nor is he unduly severe on that destructive and altogether inefficient dreamer the Arab, whom "a thousand

years separates from the Europe of to-day." The celebrated dancing girls of Biskra, we fear, are a hopeless fraud: they are recruited nowadays from everywhere save that Ouled Nail tribe whose name they bear; they are mere "Espagnoles de Batignoles."

There is a good map and some thirty illustrations.

THE NEW CHINA. By HENRI BOREL. Unwin. 10*s.* 6*d.* net.

After a casual glance at M. Henri Borel's latest book other titles obviously suggest themselves as more appropriate. Why not "The Charm of China"—nicely alliterative—or "The Colour of Peking," to range with all the art and crafty productions of its kind? Yet there will be found, when carefully read, the thinnest thread of connection between the title and the book. After many pilgrimages to the many dusty and depleted shrines in and around the capital, M. Borel comes triumphantly to the conclusion that the skies of Peking are blue; and blue are the lakes where "the god-emperors floated, far from the crowded city, in the brilliant barges with yellow pavilions"; and blue is the colour reserved to hope and the renewal of things spiritual. Blue Heaven and the azure dragon—the eternal haunter of her myriad waterways, imperial canals, and dream-ringed lakes—are collaborators in the rebuilding of the Chinese world. But there is even a closer connection between the title and the contents of this remarkable book, the most ethereal wafer of meat between delicate slabs of bread-and-butter artistry in the shape of a little chapter on 'Reform in China,' a fleshly sop to solid Cerberus. Literary vegetarians will do well to avoid all that lies between pages 117 and 135. Yet, after all, this book need not be taken too seriously as a study of the gigantic Gulliver whose awakening struggles have just now shaken a few Liliputians from his chest It is chiefly interesting for its revelation of personality and the genius of the nation to which M. Borel belongs. As we read on it is not so much the New China as the Old Holland that comes before us. There is a certain gemlike quality of prose reminding us of the Dutch Masters, and here and there are luminous impressions that recall Delft dreams of an Eastern Empire seen through a Chinese glaze. But Mynheer will have none of this. "I have been here before," he cries, and straightway moves by instinct to familiar shrines and outlets unknown to Baedeker. Perhaps, after all, he is right. Perhaps even as Dr. Aurel Stein, intrepid disturber of a thousand Buddhas slumbering in uttermost Cathay, is the Chinese pilgrim reincarnate, so to M. Borel's transient form may be allotted the soul of that supreme artist the Emperor Ch'ien Lung. Perhaps, after all, we have been looking at Imperial Dragon ware five clawed, set in the tranquil recesses of a Dutch cabinet.

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